

## Manual Handling

Manual Handling accounts for 33% of accidents reported to the Health and Safety Authority. The information below is a very simplistic description of the hazards, further detailed information including a number of videos can be found at

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Manual\\_Handling/](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Manual_Handling/)

Manual handling includes the use of the human body to lift, lower, fill, empty, or carry loads and also includes climbing, pushing, pulling, and pivoting, all of which pose the risk of injury to the back. The load can be inanimate (an object) or animate (animal or person) and manual handling injuries occurs in most industrial sectors including manufacturing and warehousing, retail, construction, agriculture and the health care sector.

Where possible the risks from Manual Handling should be eliminated or reduced through

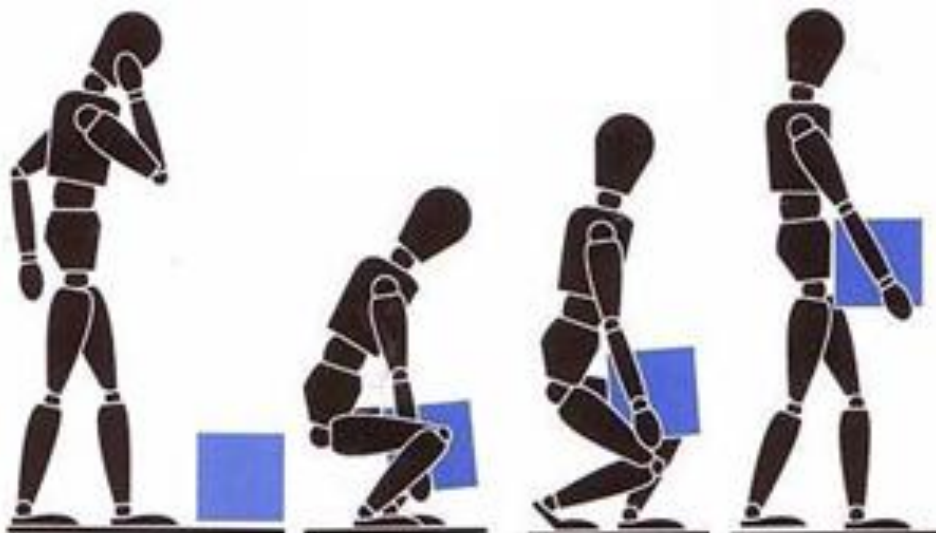
- the use of lifting aids
- reducing the load
- sharing the load; and
- providing training in ergonomic lifting techniques

Injuries can be as a result of a single incident, from the cumulative effect of manual handling or from repetitive actions.

Potentially injurious tasks may involve bending and twisting, repetitive motions, carrying or lifting heavy loads, and maintaining fixed positions for a long time.

### Lifting

Lifting containers can strain the lumbar vertebrae when done improperly. Ergonomic lifting techniques involve keeping loads close to the body and near the person's centre of gravity, using diagonal foot positions, and moving loads at waist height rather than directly from the floor



## Climbing

When climbing with a load, safe material handling includes maintaining contact with the ladder or stairs at three points (two hands and a foot or both feet and a hand). Bulky loads would require a second person or a mechanical device to assist.



## Pushing and Pulling

Manual material handling may require pushing or pulling. Pushing is generally easier on the back than pulling. It is important to use both the arms and legs to provide the leverage to start the push.



## Pivoting

When moving containers, handlers are safer when pivoting their shoulders, hips and feet with the load in front at all times rather than twisting their back. The lower back is not designed to torque or for repetitive twisting.

