

WATCH YOUR BACK
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With the holidays upon us, many people will begin hauling down their Christmas decorations and preparing their homes for holiday company. The first step to prevent a back injury is to plan ahead and not be in a hurry. Never attempt to lift an object that is too heavy or awkwardly shaped, ask for help. Keep an eye out for slippery surfaces when moving items from your shed into your home and use good body mechanics, as detailed in the below situations.

Lifting holiday boxes and moving them from one location to another:

- 1. Separate your feet shoulder width apart to give yourself a solid base of support.**
- 2. Bend at your knees, tighten your abdominal muscles and lift with your legs.**
- 3. Keep the box close to your body.**
- 4. Maintain proper alignment of your back, by keeping your ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line. Avoid twisting as you lift.**

Lifting luggage for those holiday trips:

- 1. Stand along side of the luggage, bend at the knees, grasp the handle and straighten up.**

Repetitive motions when you are folding and putting away laundry:

- 1. Keep the loads small.**
- 2. Turn your whole body instead of twisting.**
- 3. Keep the load close to your body, don't reach and lift.**
- 4. Lift with your arms and legs, not your back.**
- 5. Tighten your abdominal muscles when you lift.**

Pushing and pulling large objects, such as totes containing holiday decorations:

- 1. Stay close to the load, don't lean forward.**
- 2. When possible, push rather than pulling (you can push twice as much as you can pull without strain).**
- 3. Use both arms.**
- 4. Tighten your abdominal muscles when pushing.**

Reaching up to get down those holiday decorations:

- 1. Reach only as high as comfortable, don't stretch above shoulder level; use a stool if you need to.**
- 2. Move as close to the shelf as possible and test the weight of the container before lifting, by pushing up on one corner.**
- 3. Spread your feet in a wide stance, placing one foot in front of the other, to give you a solid base of support. Do not lean forward.**
- 4. Let your arms and legs do the work, not your back and tighten your abdominal muscles when you lift.**

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