



The
UNIVERSITY
of **VERMONT**

Physical Plant Department
SAFETY SHORT

WORKSAFE

ABCs of Heavy Lifting

Back pain can wreak havoc on a person's social, family, and work life.

Good ergonomic design in the workplace is the most effective way to reduce the risks associated with lifting. But following the rules for safe lifting is also important:

- **Hold that posture**

When the human body is standing comfortably, the spine curves naturally. This “natural” posture assures the greatest spinal and back stability. So, when lifting, lowering, or moving — even light loads — try to maintain this posture.

- **Hug that load**

Minimize the strain placed on the muscles of your back and trunk by holding a load as tightly into your body as possible.

- **Brace those abs**

Contracting your abdominal muscles, even a little, greatly improves spinal stability. So “brace” before you lift, lower, or move.

- **Ban the twist**

The twisting motion is hard on even the strongest of spines and should be avoided completely. Rather than twisting your body to turn it, pivot with your feet instead.

WORK SAFE.
LIVE SAFE.
BE SAFE.