

How Much Can I Lift?

Is there a law about the maximum weight you can lift safely?

There is no specific law regarding the maximum weight a worker can lift. Restricting loads to a particular weight does not guarantee safety. You might injure yourself by reaching awkwardly to pick up a very light load or by slipping and losing your balance while handling a modest load.

Why not?

It's difficult to develop specific lifting requirements based only on weight. Other workplace and personal factors can contribute to injury. They include:

- The distance between the object being lifted and the front of your body
- The number of lifts you repeatedly perform
- The length of time during which you perform repeated lifts
- The size, shape and texture of the object you are lifting
- The distance you carry the object
- The height from which you lift the object (starting height)
- The height to which you lift the object (finishing height)
- Whether or not the object has handholds
- The extent to which you twist your body
- Your age, health, skill, stamina and fitness level

What can you do to prevent injury?

- Try to reduce the weight and size of the object you are lifting.
- Keep objects you lift as close to your body as possible.
- Try to have lifts begin at knee level but go no higher than shoulder level.
- Avoid rotating or twisting movements when lifting or lowering a load.
- Avoid awkward postures.
- Make sure your stance is comfortable and solid.
- Lift loads smoothly
- Pace your work.
- Report symptoms early.