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| Lifting heavy items is one of the leading causes of injury in the workplace. In 2001, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that over 36 percent of injuries involving missed workdays were the result of shoulder and back injuries. Overexertion and cumulative trauma were the biggest factors in these injuries. |

   When employees use smart lifting practices and work in their "power zone," they are less likely to suffer from back sprains, muscle pulls, wrist injuries, elbow injuries, spinal    injuries, and other injuries caused by lifting heavy objects.

**Weight of Objects**

**Potential Hazards:**

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| * Some loads, such as heavy tools and machinery place great stress on muscles, discs, and vertebrae. * Lifting loads heavier than about 50 pounds will increase the risk of injury.   **Awkward**  **Potential Hazards:** |

* Bending while lifting forces the back to support the weight of the upper body in addition to the weight you are lifting. Bending while lifting places strain on the back even when lifting something as light as a screwdriver.
* Bending moves the load away from the body and allows leverage to significantly increase the effective load on the back. This increases the stress on the lower spine and fatigues the muscles.
* Reaching moves the load away from the back, increases the effective load, and places considerable strain on the shoulders.
* Carrying loads on one shoulder, under an arm, or in one hand, creates uneven pressure on the spine.
* Poor housekeeping limits proper access to objects being lifted, and forces awkward postures

**Long Duration Lifting**

**Potential Hazards:**

* Holding items for a long period of time, such as when installing fixtures, even if loads are light, increases risk of back and shoulder injury, since muscles can be starved of nutrients and waste products can build up.
* Repeatedly exerting, such as when pulling wire, can fatigue muscles by limiting recuperation times. Inadequate rest periods do not allow the body to rest.

**Environmental Factors**

**Potential Hazards:**

 Cold temperatures can cause decreased muscle flexibility, which can result in muscle pulls.

 Excessively hot temperatures can lead to dehydration, fatigue, and increased metabolic load.

 Low visibility or poor lighting increases the chance of trips and falls.