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Keep it close

- Perform tasks close to your body.
- Avoid leaning and stretching forward to reduce stress on your lower back.
- Avoid side reaches that twist the spine.
- Keep common tasks close and less common tasks out of the way.



Keep it close

Ideas for healthy shoulders and back

Use these ideas to improve tasks at work and at home.

- Arrange your workspace so commonly used or heavier items are directly in front of you and close to your body.
- Perform the most frequent tasks closest to your body.
- Even under ideal conditions (load is waist high, close to your belly button, and only lifted occasionally), controls are required when lifting more than 23kg (50lbs).
- Move unused items away from you to create a clutter-free and easy-to-use workspace.
- Take a minute when you start work to move things where you want them. Everybody uses things differently.
- Move your feet and position your body to face the work area so your spine doesn't have to twist.
- Changing activities and building rest periods into the job allow the body to recover: See poster 6.

Did you know?

- Long or frequent forward reaches can overload your back and shoulder muscles, increasing your risk of injury.
- Sideways reaches, or picking up a load to the side, can cause your back to twist.
- Twisting puts your spine in a weak position, increasing the risk of overloading your back.
- Working with your arms stretched out in front of your body fatigues your shoulders quickly.

Improve your workplace

- Keep asking yourself and others, "Why does the job require reaching and twisting?" until you understand the problem.

What are we going to do today to keep our shoulders and backs healthy while working?

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Whatever changes you make, check that you are not creating any new problems.