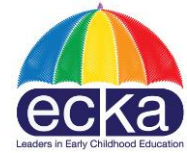


# How to Support Back Care



## How to Lift Children (And Everything Else)

Plan the lift; Consider using more than one person to perform the lift.

Two-person lifts should be performed if a child is heavy, displays strong or unpredictable movements or if you do not feel confident. Ensure that both people understand and are confident about what is required of them during a lift. Work together and maintain clear communication e.g. clarify that both people will lift on “Go”. Let the child know what you are doing at all times. Rotate staff who pick the child up, so the same person is not doing all the lifting.

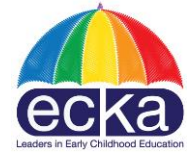
1. **Get a good foundation** by placing your feet shoulder-width apart, with the load between your feet. (If your legs are closer together, you’ll lack stability and leverage, and will be more likely to round your back and tense your neck as you lift.)
2. Resist the temptation to bend at the waist to pick up the child (or a box of toys)! Instead, **squat down with your chest forward and your buttocks sticking out**. This is so important! (In fact, bending at the waist even to pick up lightweight objects or just to talk to a pint-size tot can put strain on your back; squat or kneel instead.)
3. Stay loose and neutral. **Keep your spine straight and head/neck relaxed** and in a neutral position. Your goal is to engage and lift with your thighs—not your back.
4. As you squat down (or stand up again), feel free to get extra support by using a hand or elbow on your thigh, wall, or piece of furniture if able, as it can take some of the compression and strain off of your lower back.
5. Even as you are lifting your child, **keep them close to your body**. Reaching out to lift them up will put a strain on your back.
6. Keeping your back straight and head facing forward, engage your legs and **straighten to a standing position**.
7. Remember to **keep your body facing your child during the whole movement**. Remember, **do not twist your body** at any point while lifting, as this can also strain your back.

While a 7-step bending process seems tedious and unlikely to occur every 100th time a day you are lifting up your child, know that the more you do it, the more it becomes a habit. Why? Because it feels so much better on your back. And your back might just be the little nudge or reminder you need throughout the day.

**Apply brakes on equipment  
such as a stroller.**



# How to Support Back Care



## **Strategies To Support Back Care While Working At Floor Level**

- Bracing / transferring weight / using leverage & support
- Use of low sitting height stools, ottomans or cushions
- Provision of sitting devices specifically for low height situations
- Kneeling on one knee (knight's position) or golfers' kick for brief periods
- Sitting or squatting on the floor
- Avoid overreaching –prepare equipment & choose a position with the best access to children & equipment
- Limit the duration of continuous periods when at lowest levels
- Reduce clutter and improve the layout
- Engage child assistance where possible

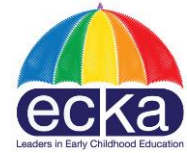
## **Strategies to Support Back Care While Working At Sitting Level**

- Adult chairs
- Use adjustable chairs with backrests only?
- Use chairs with a lower height range and narrower diameter 5-star base (ie. select chairs that are fit for the purpose).
- Establish/identify the top of the backrest as a handgrip option when moving the chair.
- Provide information, instruction & training on chair adjustment & use so these features are exploited by workers.
- Reorganise floor clutter to enhance the capacity of workers to use these chairs in different areas.

## **Strategies to Support Back Care While Working with Cots**

- Need height adjustable cots so the top of the mattress is not lower than 650 mm.
- Need height-adjustable side rails.
- Adjustment features & side rail should be safe and easy to use for carers, babies & toddlers

# How to Support Back Care



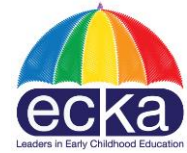
## Strategies to Support Back Care While Working At Change Tables

- Handles for steps to pull them out.
- Rails for children to grasp when moving up & down steps.
- Steps should lock into place when pulled out.
- Minimise lifting children to & from steps & the bench.
- Manipulate bench height with different thickness padding.
- Consider side positioning of toddlers (provide it is safe).
- Good access to items needed to sink & items on the bench & in shelves or lockers.

## Strategies to Support Back Care While Working Outside

- Sort & store items relative to their shape, size & weight & their expected frequency of use –daily, weekly, seasonal.
- Organise the storage location & method of specific items to match the item & their frequency of use. For example, containers on shelves, large toys on the floor underneath.
- Use larger shelves, 600 + deep, to increase the storage capacity of the shelves. For example, Bunnings shelves are 840 mm deep & fit 1 large plastic tub (600 to 740 mm long).
- Limit the height of the upper shelf so it is not higher than 1700 mm (provided large and / or heavy items (greater than 10 kgs) are not placed on the shelf
- With outdoor storage, avoid the need to use steps to access higher storage levels
- Purchase or protect outdoor structural / climbing equipment that can tolerate remaining outside
- If necessary develop a security system such as chaining it together rather than carrying it into a shed or storeroom.
- Store items close to their point of use, such as those used in the sandpit. Make them safe.
- Use smaller, lighter sand pit covers with loop straps for grasping & sandbags with loop handles to hold the cover in place. If necessary, use overlapping covers rather than a single larger, heavier cover.

# How to Support Back Care



## Strategies to Support Back Care While Working Indoor

- Sort & store items relative to their shape, size & weight & their expected frequency of use –daily, weekly, seasonal.
- Organise the storage location & method of specific items to match the item & their frequency of use. For example, containers on shelves, large toys on the floor underneath.
- Use larger shelves (where relevant & possible), 600 + deep, to increase the storage capacity of the shelves.
- Limit the height of the upper shelf so it is not higher than 1700 mm (provided large and / or heavy items (greater than 10 kgs) are not placed on the shelf
- Avoid the need to use steps to access higher storage levels –if possible.
- If not, use the most stable options available & organise shelf height relative to step height.
- Develop smaller, more stable block trolleys. Use 2 or 3 smaller ones to replace larger trolleys.
- Use better designed trolleys. Bigger wheels, high handles & capacity to restrain or hold the load.
- Expand the use of transparent containers. Select size relative to items they will contain to limit weight.
- Store large tubs on an individual shelf or no more than 2 high

# How to Support Back Care

## Four additional strategies that can prevent back pain, injury and strain when performing daily tasks for children.

- **Lunge strategy for getting down to floor or child eye level**

Take a large step backwards with one leg, bending the front knee so the back knee lowers to the floor. Handy for zipping a jacket or tying shoes, the lunge can also be used to pick a child up, popping them on your thigh before standing, and getting down to the floor while keeping the legs strong and protecting the back.



- **Golfer's lift for picking up light objects with the aid of furniture**

Similar to how a golfer holds a club while raising one leg when getting the ball out of the hole, use a nearby chair or other piece of furniture for support while you pivot from the hip to get items like dropped forks and toys.

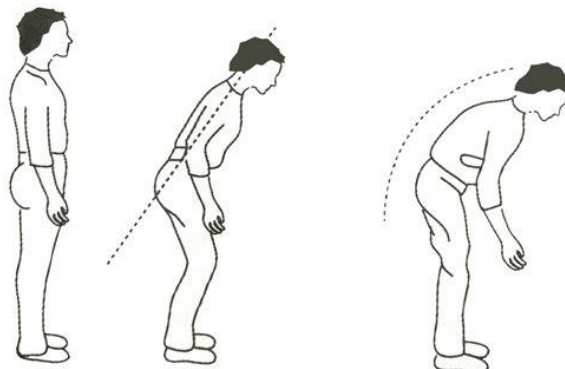


- **Forward lean/hip hinge for lifting something at waist height**

Lift one leg backwards as you brace your front leg against something stationary and then hinge forward from the front hip - such as leaning into the car when getting a child in or out of the car seat or leaning against a cot to tuck in the sheet.

Hip Hinge DO

Hip Hinge DON'T



# How to Support Back Care



- **Squat for reaching/lifting at knee level**

Squat with weight through the heels, your knees in line with your ankles, hips backward and trunk forward. Helpful for when lifting a child out of a stroller, picking up an item from under a table or cleaning a low table.



- **Abdominals for all lifting**

Don't forget to pull in your abdominal muscles before any bending or lifting to protect your back and prevent strain.