

Lifting kids

Whether the kids are your own, your grandkids, or the ones you're minding for someone else, children can be back-breaking work. I have no statistics for how many child-lifting injuries we see in this country, but I'd put money on it being a significant number.

So what can you do to protect yourself? How can you stop these wriggly creatures from damaging you?

Here are some ideas on how to prevent those injuries:

- A child counts as a heavy object. So bend your knees when you lift one. Try it a few times when you're not in a hurry. Practice bending your knees, keeping your back straight and lifting using your legs.
- Keep your legs slightly apart as you lift children (or any other heavy object). If possible, try to keep one in front of the other.
- Do not twist as you are lifting. Lift first, then turn.
- Change your thinking - if you've had to reduce your exercise time because of the children think of lifting them as a leg exercise. Bending your knees will make you use your thigh muscles!
- Alternate which hip you put a child on. Change which side of the car you put the car seat on. Feed from both sides of the high chair. All of this helps you cut down on repetitive activities so you don't continuously strain one side of your back.
- When handing things to kids on the floor squat down, don't just lean forwards.

Always bear in mind that you will be less useful to your children if you are injured. Back pain in particular can make caring for kids really difficult. So even when you're tired try to think about your own posture and movement, not just what the small person needs.

There really is no scientific answer to solve every child-lifting situation. As I said, they're wriggly and unpredictable. But I hope the above will help keep you pain-free.