

The Snowflake Trust

Operating the Snowflake Night Shelter

Lifting Advice

The Trustees are aware that there is a considerable amount of lifting and moving of equipment involved in the setting up and packing up of the Night Shelter. One of the biggest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly.

Learning and following the correct method for lifting and handling heavy loads can help to prevent injury and avoid back pain, and the Trustees offer the following advice from the Health & Safety Executive for the guidance of all staff and Volunteers.

1. Think before you lift

- Plan the lift.
 - Where is the load going to be placed?
 - Use appropriate handling aids where possible.
 - Will help be needed with the load?
 - Remove obstructions, such as discarded wrapping materials.
 - For long lifts, such as from floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change your grip on it.
 - Keep the load close to the waist for as long as possible while lifting. The distance of the load from the spine at waist height is an important factor in the overall load on the spine and back muscles.
 - Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If closely approaching the load isn't possible, try to slide it towards the body before trying to lift it.

2. Adopt a stable position

- Your feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load if it's on the ground).
- Be prepared to move your feet during the lift in order to maintain a stable posture.

- Wearing over-tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, such as heels or flip flops, may make this difficult.
- 3. Ensure a good hold on the load**
- Where possible, hug the load close to the body. This may be a better option than gripping it tightly with the hands only.
- 4. Don't bend your back when lifting**
- A slight bending of the back, hips and knees at the start of the lift is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees - in other words, fully squatting.
 - Don't flex the back any further while lifting - this can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.
 - Don't twist when you lift - avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially while the back is bent.
 - Keep your shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.
- 5. Keep your head up**
- Keep your head up when handling the load.
 - Look ahead, not down at the load once it has been held securely.
- 6. Move smoothly**
- Don't jerk or snatch the load as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.
- 7. Lower down, and then adjust**
- Put the load down and then adjust.
 - If you need to position the load precisely, put it down first, and then slide it into the desired position.
- 8. Know your limits**
- Don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage.
 - There's a difference between *what people can lift* and *what they can safely lift*.
- **If you're in doubt, seek advice or get help from the Venue Coordinator.**