

What's the best way to move something? Ask someone else to do it for you!

What's the next best way? Be sure you know the proper way to move materials yourself.

If you could transfer the risk of handling heavy, large and awkward items and not get hurt, wouldn't you do it? However, for many people who must move heavy items on a regular basis at work or at home, this is not a reality. One of the best ways to avoid suffering a muscle strain or sprain is to use a hand truck.

The use of this tool also increases productivity and lessens the chance of dropping and damaging merchandise.

Although hand trucks appear to be fairly simple devices, users must remember a few basic safety procedures:

- Use a hand truck that is appropriate for the job and the load to be carried.
- When stacking items on the truck, keep the heaviest load on the bottom to lower the center of gravity.
- Balance the load forward on the axle of the hand truck, so the weight will not be carried by the handle.
- Never stack items so high that you can't see where you're going.
- When carrying multiple boxes side by side, attempt to stagger them to "lock in" the boxes.
- Be sure the items to be transported on the hand truck are sturdy enough to be moved in this manner. Secure any bulky, awkward or delicate objects to the truck.
- Plan your route. Be aware of potential hazards to be encountered during the path of travel.
- As a rule, avoid walking backwards with a hand truck. Remember the back care rule: It is safer to push than to pull.
- Hand truck injuries typically occur by getting your hand pinched between the handles and a nearby stationary object, so take care when working your way through tight spaces. The use of gloves can provide extra protection.
- Always maintain a safe speed and keep the hand truck under control.
- Always park the trucks in a designated area, never in aisles or other places where they may cause a trip hazard or traffic obstruction. Two wheeled trucks should be stored on the chisel with handles leaning against a wall.

When you use a hand truck properly, it does the job and reduces the chance you'll strain a muscle or be injured. Let the truck do the work for you!