

## Preventing Back Injuries during Classroom Set-up

1. **Start Early.** Allow enough time to set up your classroom. Avoid rushing and unpacking everything at the last minute. Do a little work over several days.
2. **Warm up and stretch your back.** Performing tasks you are not used to, such as unpacking and moving boxes, may cause aches and pains. Pace yourself, stretch, unpack, then stretch some more. (i.e. Side bends and Backbends)
3. **Use good body mechanics.**
  - Try not to bend at the waist for long periods of time.
  - Avoid twisting, especially when lifting or lowering heavy objects.
4. **Don't carry overloaded boxes.**
5. **Use smaller boxes to keep loads lighter.**
6. **Lift boxes as little as possible.**
  - Plan the lift and test the load.
  - Get help. Use carts, hand dollies or the buddy system.
  - When using a cart, hand dolly, or even a chair, make sure they are in good working order and the path is clear. Don't forget – a chair can be used as a cart.
  - Keep the load close.
  - Lift with your legs and keep your back straight.
  - Lower the load the same way.
7. **Never catch a falling object.** Sometimes it is better to let the box drop than to try to catch it and get injured. Some back injuries occur as reactions to falling boxes, as well as shifting contents.
8. **Use good boxes with pre-cut handholds.** Good handholds can make moving much easier and safer because they encourage proper lifting techniques. Awkward grips contribute to hand and arm fatigue.
9. **Be realistic with your abilities.** If you need help, ask. Knowing your capabilities will help prevent back injuries.
10. **Never stand on tables, desks or chairs.** Use sturdy step stools and ladders to lift objects or to hang items.

