**Causes of injury and discomfort**

- Repetitive work, i.e., bending, twisting, pushing, pulling and lifting.
- Twisting while spine is supporting a heavy load.
- Heavy physical work.

**Over-extension:**

- Over-extension is reaching out and away from the body which greatly increases injury risk.
- The further a weight is out from the body, the more force is necessary to do the work.
- Move closer to the load or move the load closer to you prior to lifting.
Keep your back straight (straight does not mean vertical)

Those long, thin muscles in your back are made for holding the spine upright, but not for lifting extra weight. When your back is rounded forward, it stretches the muscle out of shape. If you then force extra weight onto it by lifting, it is a sure way to injure yourself. Also, by keeping your back straight, you keep your head right over your shoulders where it belongs, not out over your chest like a turtle sticking its neck out of the shell.

Tighten your abdominal muscles when lifting

This is harder than it sounds, but when you hold your stomach muscles in, it creates a pressure in your abdominal cavity that gives extra support to your low back. Do not mistake this for holding your breath, however. When lifting, it is important that you still breathe normally. An easy trick to remember is to breathe out when you are lifting.
Scenarios: Proper Techniques

This stance will give you excellent balance and a solid base from which to lift. You will be able to shift your weight side to side and forward and backward without losing your balance.

Get close to the person or object you need to lift. Keeping the load or resident close to you will lessen the strain on your back. Use a gait belt for all resident transfers.
Use a gait belt! By placing a gait belt securely and snugly around the resident's waist before assisting him to transfer, you will have an easy way to support the resident. If the resident starts to lose his balance, the gait belt gives you a way to assist the resident to regain his balance, or to lower him to the floor without injury.

Lift with a smooth, continuous motion. To pivot the resident to the chair, turn your feet and encourage him to do the same. Never twist your back with your feet planted in one spot. Cue the resident to reach for the surface he is going to, and to lower himself gently. Never try to move the resident faster than he can comfortably and safely transfer.
Continue to use good body mechanics, while assisting the resident to lower into the chair, by keeping your feet staggered and apart, and bending at the knees and hips.
Bending and lifting

- Ensure that the load is a safe weight.
- Ensure it is safe and not hazardous.
- Keep the feet apart and staggered.
- Squat to lift and lower.
- Minimize bending at the waist.
- Keep the back bowed in while bending.
- Get a good grip.
- Keep the weight close to the body.
- Keep load centered near the waist.
- Turn with the feet and not the body.
- Do not twist or jerk suddenly.
Teamwork:

- Identify when and where two-person lifts are required.
- When you can’t handle it by yourself get help!