When Your Body Beats You: Preventing Over-Exertion and Musculoskeletal Injury Picture This



In the image, the worker is lifting an extremely heavy box with a rounded back,

his knees barely bent, and the load held far away from his body. He is visibly straining, twisting his torso as he tries to stand up, putting intense pressure on his lower back. He’s attempting to lift a load clearly labeled “EXTREMELY HEAVY” without assistance or equipment. Every part of his posture increases the risk of a sudden muscle tear, slipped disc, or long-term musculoskeletal injury.

A safer approach is to keep the load close to the body, bend the knees, and lift with the legs while maintaining a straight back. Workers should evaluate the weight before lifting and use tools like dollies, carts, or team assistance for heavy or awkward loads. Avoid twisting while carrying and pivot with the feet instead. Taking these small steps can prevent over-exertion and protect the spine during demanding tasks.