

# FACT SHEET

FS No. 88-046-0821

## ERGONOMICS—CHILDCARE

Childcare is demanding; you spend your day standing, walking, bending, stooping, and lifting to attend to the needs of infants and toddlers.

- How many times during the day do you find yourself lifting children as they play or to comfort them or change their diapers?
- How often do you bend down to secure a child in a high chair?
- How many times do you stoop to wipe up a spill or pick up toys?
- How often do you end the day with an aching back?

The good news is you don't have to reach in the medicine cabinet at the end of your work day to treat your back pain. There are lifting techniques and exercises to keep your back healthy.

### INFANT LIFTING TECHNIQUES:

#### The Tripod Lift:



U.S. Army Illustration, APHC

1. Put one foot next to the child. Keep your back straight, push your buttocks out, and slowly lower yourself down onto one knee. (For support as you lower yourself down, put one hand on a stool or on your thigh.)
2. Position the child close to the knee on the floor.
3. Slide the child from the knee on the floor to mid-thigh. Keep your head forward, your back straight, and your buttocks out; lift the child onto the opposite thigh.
4. Put both of your forearms under the child with your palms facing upward, and hug the child close to you.
5. Prepare for the lift: look forward.
6. Lift upwards following your head and shoulders. Hold the child close to your body. Lift by extending your legs with your back straight, your buttocks out, and breathe out as you lift.

### The Pivot Technique:



U.S. Army Illustration, APHC

Use the pivot technique for lifts that require you to turn, such as lifting an infant to the diapering surface. Twisting while lifting can cause serious damage to the tissues of the back. Proper steps when using the pivot technique are to—

1. Use the tripod technique to lift the infant.
2. Hold the infant very close to your body.
3. Turn your foot 90 degrees toward the way you want to turn.
4. Bring your other foot next to the leading foot. Do not twist your body!

### TODDLER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

Working with toddlers requires constant interaction with little ones who are often very active, impulsive and heavy. Manually lifting toddlers should be avoided whenever possible, but when necessary, the guidelines describing proper lifting techniques should be followed.

- Avoid bending at the waist to reach for children.
- Squat with feet shoulder width apart, keeping back straight and pushing your buttocks out to bring yourself as close to the child as possible.
- Tighten stomach muscles and look forward using thigh muscles to raise yourself.
- Exhale as you lift.

### OTHER WAYS TO REDUCE RISK OF INJURY WHEN CARING FOR TODDLERS

- Store most frequently used and heaviest items in easily accessible areas at waist height.
- Adjust diapering surfaces to waist height when steps to the surface are not available.
- Lower side of cribs to lift and lower child in and out of the crib.
- Use adult size chair seats with child size legs.
- Avoid bending down at the waist to interact. Instead, use squatting or kneeling positions.
- Squat or kneel on a kneepad.
- While sitting on the floor, sit against a wall, furniture, or pillow to support the back.
- Use rolling carts or strollers rather than carrying heavy loads and children.
- Instead of repetitive bending and stooping to clean up toys, and so forth, incorporate this into children's clean-up and have toddlers pick up the toys.
- A U-shaped table allows a caregiver to sit with the children in an adult-size seat with child size legs.