

# Strains at School – Proper Lifting Techniques Stats and Facts

## FACTS

1. **Improper Lifting Techniques:** Bending at the waist or twisting while lifting can strain the lower back.□
2. **Awkward Postures:** Reaching above shoulder level or extending arms to lift objects increases the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.□
3. **Overexertion:** Attempting to lift heavy or bulky items without assistance or mechanical aids can cause injuries.□
4. **Repetitive Lifting:** Performing the same lifting tasks repeatedly without breaks can lead to cumulative trauma disorders.□
5. **Poor Footwear:** Wearing inappropriate shoes can lead to slips, trips, or falls during lifting activities.□
6. **Lack of Training:** Students and school staff often lack formal training on proper lifting techniques, increasing the risk of musculoskeletal injuries when handling heavy classroom materials or sports equipment.

## STATS

- In 2021–2022, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) accounted for 27.7% of all serious work-related injuries and illnesses in private industry. □
- The healthcare and social assistance industry experienced the highest number of musculoskeletal injuries and illnesses in 2021–2022. □
- WorkSafeBC noted in 2025 that lifting-related musculoskeletal injuries, including sprains and strains, are a leading cause of workplace claims among school staff, with over 3,000 claims annually in British Columbia.

- A study revealed a high prevalence of MSD (77.9%) among special education teachers, with the lower back, shoulder, and neck being the most affected regions.
- The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) reported in 2022 that 40% of school staff in high-risk roles (e.g., custodians, physical education teachers) experienced strains due to lifting without proper ergonomic practices.
- A 2020 report from the Journal of School Health found that 20% of middle and high school students experienced shoulder or back strain from carrying backpacks weighing more than 15% of their body weight.