

With high-speed saws, routers, and other machinery; long workpieces; and large, often cumbersome assemblies, the woodworking and furniture industries are partially susceptible to workplace accidents and injuries.

Reaching, bending, stretching, squatting, and other types of bodily contortions not only can cause stress and fatigue resulting in quality and productivity losses, they can also lead to more dangerous accidents.

Number one among all claims, however, is back injury caused by lifting. While a great deal of effort and attention has gone into programs designed to help eliminate lifting injuries by teaching workers how to lift, back injuries are still the number one cause of lost time and insurance claims. The right answer to the problem, is to completely eliminate lifting, bending and stretching as a regular part of any factory job. Statistics show there are approximately 5 million workplace injuries in the U.S. every year. One-third of these are back injuries caused by lifting. They result in direct costs ranging from \$20,000-\$30,000 per claim, plus the indirect costs of lost productivity. The elimination of lifting has become a cost-saving imperative for industry.

This booklet is designed to show how it can be accomplished through the use of simple and inexpensive mechanical lifting and positioning equipment.

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OPERATION	TYPICAL PROBLEMS	RECOMMENDATIONS	
Handling long workpieces	In trying to manipulate long workpieces, the operator runs the risk of an accident as a result of losing control of the workpiece or injury resulting from bending, reaching, and lifting.	Tandem lift tables provide support for long workpieces while bringing them to any desired height. When equipped with conveyor tops, these tables make the handling of long workpieces easy and safe.	
Positioning lightweight work	Even with lightweight workpieces, if the worker has to stoop, squat, bend, or reach, the potential for injury is greatly increased; and time is always wasted.	Positioning tables designed specifically for light loads provide an economical means of vertically positioning work for maximum worker comfort, safety, and efficiency.	
Workpiece feeding and offloading	Feeding and offloading machines requires continual lifting and positioning of workpieces. These activities often lead to production-robbing fatigue and even more serious cumulative trauma disorders.	By using lift tables, lifter/transporters, or level loaders to accomplish level (no lifting) feeding and offloading, many of these injuries and costly downtime can be avoided.	
Working out of parts baskets	Bending, reaching, stretching, and lifting can be serious problems when removing parts from baskets. Since this is usually a repetitive process, the danger of injury increases with time.	By using lifting and tilting equipment, baskets can be positioned so that the worker can remove the parts from the top to the bottom of the basket with minimum effort.	
Moving hand trucks easily onto lifts	Hand pallet trucks and dollies often get "hung up" on the lift unless the ramp is very long and the slope is very gradual.	Low profile or zero height lift tables (3" or less) can be used to allow hand trucks and other wheeled or castered equipment to be easily rolled onto the table surface.	
Moving materials between different levels	Inclines in conveyors can be dangerously steep or require too much room for gentler grades.	A lift table with a conveyor top allows materials to be conveyed on at one level and off at another, thereby eliminating the need for lifting.	
Feeding and offloading large sheets at saws, and other equipment	This is a job that often requires two people and involves bending, reaching, and stretching.	By continuously maintaining sheets at a level height, lift tables simplify the feeding and offloading process and allow the job to be handled by one person without the danger of lifting injuries.	
Taking the lifting out of transporting	Whenever flat bed trucks or dollies are used, workers frequently are required to lift material or equipment from the truck to a bench or machine.	Lifting related injuries can be greatly reduced by using lifter/transporters which combine the functions of a wheeled transporter and a lift table. They are inexpensive and available in both manual or powered models.	
Stretch wrapping	Hand stretch wrapping requires the operator to walk backwards while bent over and pulling on the hand wrapper in order to stretch the film for a tight wrap.	Low-cost powered stretch wrappers with almost flat turntables that can be loaded using a hand pallet truck provide a safe alternative to hand wrapping.	
Loading and unloading pallets	This is a common operation both at receiving and shipping locations. The bending, lifting, and reaching required is not only strenuous and fatiguing, it can also result in injury to the back or other parts of the body.	Spring-actuated level loaders, automatically adjust in height as the load is progressively added or removed, allowing the operator to work with little or no lifting. Turntables rotate the pallet for near-side loading and unloading.	