Back Safety
The back is made up of a group of bones called vertebrae held together by ligaments, and cushioned by discs. This whole structure is called the spine. Your back affects our ability to perform activities both at home and at work, and it is important to keep it healthy.

How can lifting harm your back?
- Your back works to support your upper body when you stand or sit. The upper body can weigh 80-120 pounds.
- Lifting adds extra weight to your back.
- When you bend at the waist and lean forward to lift, your body weight becomes part of the load. The further away the load is from your body, the greater the workload placed on your back. (One foot increases workload tenfold.)
- Excessive and repetitive force can stretch and tear ligaments and discs, eventually leading to pain and possible injury.

How can you protect your back?
- Evaluate the load before starting. If the load is over 30 pounds, consider getting help or use equipment if possible.
- Get into a power stance when you lift. Position your feet at least shoulder width apart, bend both knees and hips to keep your back in a neutral position.
- Get as close to the load as possible to reduce the force placed on your back when lifting.
- Lift with your legs like an elevator rather than using your back like a crane.

Key Tips
- Get as close to the load as you can.
- Use a power stance with your feet at least shoulder width apart.

To learn more …
- http://ergonomics.ucla.edu/backsafety

To schedule training…
- http://recreation.ucla.edu/backsafety