

Manually Lifting and Moving Slabs

(Source: Safety in the Stone Business, revised 2012. MIA)

1. The unsafe handling of stone slabs causes many of the injuries that occur in the shop and on the job site.

The following are some guidelines to minimize these accidents:

- Avoid lifting if possible and practical, by pushing, pulling, rolling or sliding slabs to be moved. Use mechanical aids (slab dollies, suction lifts, scissor clamps, etc.) or request help from other employees when necessary. Individuals should not attempt to manually lift items weighing more than 75 pounds (34 kilograms).
- Warm up before lifting. Stretch with side and back bends.
- Lift only loads that can be safely handled. Get help when lifting or moving heavy objects.
- The technique for proper lifting is to bend the knees, not the back, and let the more powerful leg muscles do most of the work.
- Establish good footing. Keep the load close to the body. Bend at the knees as you grasp the slab. Get a full handgrip; keep the body erect and the spine in an upright position.
- Lift smoothly, straightening the legs (avoid jerky lifts). Reverse the procedure to set the slab down.
- Avoid twisting your body when lifting. When turning, shift the position of your feet rather than twisting your body at the waist.
- Never lift or carry a stone slab in the flat (horizontal) position. Always lift the slab on end in the vertical position. Lifting the slab flat can cause the slab to break, resulting in injury.
- When unloading slabs, never have a person support a slab alone.
- Never jump off a dock onto a truck containing slabs. This could cause the slabs to shift or tip over.
- Always stand at the end of the slab, never in the fall shadow.
- Remember: there is no place for complacency in the stone business.

Stay Alert. Stay Alive.

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2. Sample Exercises

- Starting each day with these exercises can help reduce injuries:

Stretching Exercise Routine

1. **Neck Rotation**

Turn head slowly to look over left shoulder, and then turn head slowly to look over right shoulder. Hold each turn for 3 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.



2. **Neck Flexion**

Bend head forward. Hold for 3 seconds. Bend head back. Hold for 3 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.



3. **Chest Stretch**

Clasp your hands behind your back at buttock level. Roll your shoulders back and keep chest out. Hold 10 seconds.

Repeat 2 times.



4. **Upper Back Stretch**

Pull elbow across chest to opposite shoulder. Force of hand at elbow. Hold 10 seconds.

Repeat 2 times, each arm.



5. **Backward Bend**

Lift upper body and arch back while breathing out. Hold 3 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.



6. **Hamstring Stretch**

Hands on hips. Front leg knee is straight with toes up. Lean forward at the hips to feel stretch in back of the straight leg. Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat 2 times, each leg.



7. **Quad/Calf Stretch**

Hands on hips. One foot in front of the other, toes pointing straight. Keep back leg heel on floor and bend front knee. Bring front leg forward for more stretch.

Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat 2 times, each leg.



8. **Squat**

Feet more than shoulder width apart. Arms on hips. Keep back straight and squat like sitting down.

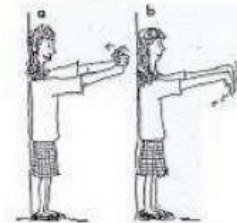
Repeat 5 times.



9. **Forearm Stretch**

Arm in front of you, elbow straight. Bend wrist down, hold for 10 seconds. Bend wrist up, hold for 10 seconds.

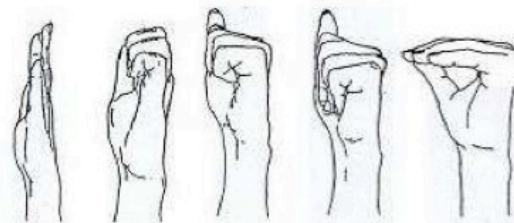
Repeat 2 times, each arm.



10. **Tendon Glides**

Start and return to straight position after sequence of hand motions. Keep wrist straight during each position and curl fingers.

Repeat sequence 5 times.



Everyone should complete 4 to 5 stretching exercises before the start of their shift. Skip or modify any exercises that may feel uncomfortable.

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