

# KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

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## Practicing Good Body Mechanics

**What are body mechanics?** Body mechanics refers to the way we move during every day activities. Good body mechanics may be able to prevent or correct problems with posture (the way you stand, sit, or lie.) Good body mechanics may also protect your body, especially your back, from pain and injury. Using good body mechanics is important for everyone.

**Why do I need to have good body mechanics?** Having your body in the right position helps protect your back and allows you to use your body in a safe way. Your spine goes through the midline of your back, giving your back stability and controlling its movement.

**How do I practice good body mechanics?** The following are some steps to help you with good body mechanics:

- **When standing:** Keep your feet flat on the floor separated by about 12 inches. Keep your back straight.
- **When walking:** Keep your back straight as you walk.
- **When lifting an object:** Your feet should be apart, in a standing position. Keep your back straight. Lower your body to get close to the object. Bend from your hips and knees. **DO NOT** bend at the waist. When turning, rotate your whole body, not just your back. Hold the object by putting your hands around it. Keeping your knees bent and your back straight, lift the object using your arm and leg muscles. Do not use your back muscles. If the object is too heavy, ask another person to help you.
- **When carrying an object:** Hold the object close to your body. **DO NOT** carry things that are too heavy for you. Always ask for help to move heavy objects. There are many devices available to help carry heavy objects. If you need help by using a device, ask your supervisor how to get one.
- **Pushing or pulling:** Use the weight of your body to help push or pull an object. Your feet should be apart as in the standing position. Keep your back straight. Lower your body to get close to the object. Bend from your hips and knees. **DO NOT** bend at the waist. If the object or person you are pulling or pushing is too heavy, ask someone to help you.
- **Sitting:** If you can, sit on a hard chair with a straight back. Put a pillow or rolled towel to support your lower back. When you sit for a long time, raise one leg higher than the other to help keep from getting tired. This can be done by putting a leg on a footstool. If doing something, such as reading or knitting, put a pillow on your lap to raise the items closer to you.

