

## Principles of Joint Protection

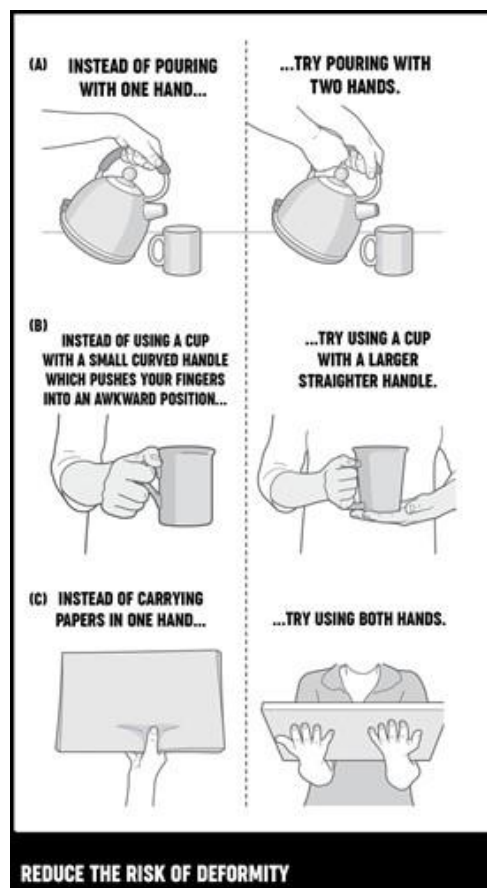
**Definition: Using your body in ways that minimizes stress to the joints and surrounding tissues**

- Use larger, stronger joints when possible, use 2 hands when practical.
- Minimize the forces acting on joints and/or minimize repetitive activity.
- Avoid lifting or carrying heavy weights, especially in ways that stretch (distract) joints.
- Try to keep joints in or near neutral (mid-range). Keep neck and low back in neutral. Use 'hinge hip' to bend forward.
- Use the proper tool for the job: use adaptive/assistive devices
- Keep muscles strong.
- Avoid staying in one position for too long.
- Use splints and braces if necessary.



### Body Mechanics

- For lifting:
  - Keep close to items you are lifting.
  - Choose a lifting technique that suits your limitations, to protect back, neck, knees, hands, shoulders, etc.
- Stay upright, don't lean forward. Avoid prolonged bending over.
- Keep a broad base of support (feet apart).
- Use your body weight.
- Push rather than pull, when possible.
- Avoid twisting. Avoid reaching.



Pictures from, and additional suggestions at:

- <https://myra.org.au/article/living-arthritis-reduce-joint-wear/joint-care>
- <https://myra.org.au/article/living-arthritis-reduce-joint-wear/your-home>

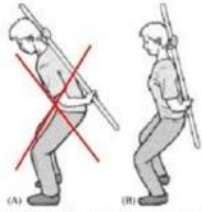


Figure 1 The hip hinge: (A) incorrect—stooping and (B) correct—squatting.



Figure 3 Brushing teeth: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.



Figure 5 Picking up a bag from the floor: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.



Figure 2 Getting out of chair: (A) correct and (B) incorrect.

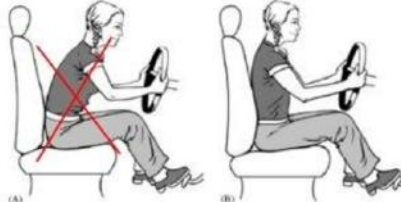


Figure 4 Driving: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.



Figure 6 Putting a baby in the car: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.



Figure 7 Changing a baby: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.



Figure 8 Lifting: (A) incorrect and (B) correct.

Try to keep neck aligned with low back and hips, and keep low back in neutral. Flex from the hips (“hinge-hip”) to bend forward.



## “Ready, Set, Go”

Planning and preparation can protect your body

- **“Ready”**: Correct your posture and alignment so you are ready to move.
- **“Set”**: Activate your stabilizing muscles so they are set to stabilize joints.
- **“Go”**: Now, go ahead and move!

## “Pull Yourself Together”

- People with HSD are like these push toys with the tension released (bottom picture)
- We need to “Pull ourselves together” so the joints are held in better alignment (top picture)
- This creates a slight, healthy stiffness in the joints (not rigid tension)
- Before you move, think about pulling your body together and stacking yourself like the push toy.
- This can decrease tension from joints hanging down, and improve joint alignment before you move.

