



Protecting your back during cookie season.

When cookie season rolls around, it's a good idea to take the time to review a few easy things you can do to help stay safe and protect yourself from injuries. One of the most common injuries during Girl Scout cookie season are back injuries.

A back problem can change your life, so take the time today to review and use these simple lifting tips and techniques.

Warm up before lifting.

Always warm up before any lifting. These two light stretches will improve performance and reduce your risk of injury.

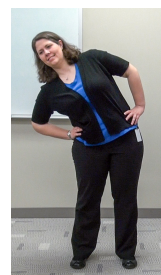
1. Low Back Rotation Stretch

Stand with hands on hips. Keep your hips and legs centered while gently rolling your upper body forward, right, backward and left to stretch your lower back. Do five slow rotations, gradually expanding the circle each time. Repeat in the opposite direction.

2. Hamstring and Achilles Stretch

Position your body with one leg forward and the toes of that foot raised up. Keep your back straight while you bend forward at the waist. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh and knee. Shift your weight onto your forward leg and bend your knee, keeping your back leg straight and your heel on the floor. Hold each stretch for 20 seconds. Stretch each leg twice.

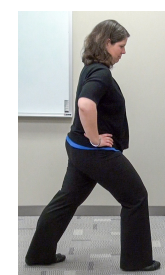
1a.



1b.



2a.



2b.



How to carry large cookie boxes.

Carry only one or two large cookie boxes at a time. Be sure you can see where you're going and have a firm grip on the boxes. Make sure the path ahead of you is clear of any obstacles that might cause a trip or fall.



Step One

Stand close to the load with your feet spread shoulder width apart. One foot should be slightly in front of the other for better balance and stability.



Step Two

Squat down, bending at the knees, not at the waist. Tuck your chin while keeping your back as straight as possible.



Step Three

Grip the boxes firmly before you begin to lift it. As you stand, be careful to hold the box close to your body. Maintain the natural curve in your lower back and keep your core muscles tight.



Step Four

Slowly begin straightening your legs, lifting slowly. Use your leg muscles — not your back — to lift the boxes. Be careful not to twist your body.



Step Five

Once the lift is complete, keep the boxes as close to your body as possible. The more the load moves away from your body, the greater the stress to your lower back (the most common area of injury).

More tips to help keep you safe.

Slips, trips and falls can happen even when you're not lifting heavy cookie boxes, so be aware of your surroundings at all times.

- Watch for slick areas and put up hazard signs as necessary.
- If you are lifting out of the back of a truck, be mindful of where the edge of the truck is to prevent a fall.
- Know what you are lifting and how you will lift it before you lift it.
- Be aware of the weight of the object and assess if it's safe to lift on your own.
- Make sure the work area is flat, dry and clear of debris.
- Make sure the lift pathway is clear.
- Remove any tripping hazards or debris.
- Make sure the load does not obscure your vision.
- Be careful if carrying boxes in from the outside.
 - Look for potholes if you're on a road.
 - If it's wet or snowy outside, use a rug to prevent falls while carrying boxes inside.
- Pivot with your feet – don't twist your back when carrying loads.
- When lifting awkward or heavy loads, utilize a two-person lift.
 - Be sure to keep the load level while lifting.

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