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***Push, don't pull a pallet jack***

Pallet jacks are common in the retail industry for moving freight.  The sight of one should trigger the memory of a basic rule when it comes to operating a pallet jack.

A person can push almost four times the weight they can pull. That's why when the choice to push or pull a pallet jack arises, it's generally safer to push a pallet jack.

Rick Means, WRA's Safety Specialist, reminds that in moving weight, a worker is strongest pushing with his legs for a foundation. The physics follows the same principle as in lifting; lift using your legs for balance, not your back.

People who get hurt on the job moving weight often ignore the body mechanics involved in moving weight safely.

Using both arms to pull a pallet jack behind you is a recipe for being run into by the pallet if you have to stop suddenly. You also take your body out of its more natural position which can lead to lower back issues. By pushing, a worker will find he or she has better control to steer and maneuver away from obstacles and they can stop quicker.

It takes less energy to push a pallet jack compared to pulling it. Ask your employees to spend the day pushing the jack instead of pulling it. They’re sure to notice the difference in energy used by the end of the day.

Whether it's a manual or electric machine, it remains a good idea to push rather than pull a loaded pallet jack. The only difference between the two types of pallet jacks is that an electric one will operate when you are in the pulling position. In that case, the jack is doing all the moving work as the operator works controls located in the handle.

Here is a handy [load calculator](http://www2.worksafebc.com/ppcc/default.htm) that explains how much effort it takes the average person to move a specific load.

WRA employs Rick as a Safety Specialist who is available to members to help draw up safety plans and suggest topics for safety meetings. Contact him at 360-943-9198 x18 or [rmeans@waretailservices.com](mailto:rmeans@waretailservices.com)