

Chapter 4

On The Road Again

This chapter is written with the touring and gigging musician in mind, including roadies and self-sufficient musicians. For those of you lucky enough to have roadies, thank them and share this information with them. For those of you who lug your own gear around night after night, this info is for you as well.

Humping gear

Depending on how big your production is, there will be gear to move in and out of the venue. This could be as simple as bringing in a guitar case and a small amp for the stage, or as complex as hauling Marshall stacks, p.a. equipment or light and sound gear. The rules for lifting are pretty much the same no matter what the situation.

When lifting unwieldy objects, bend at the knees and bring the object as close to yourself as you can. Keep your back, head and neck straight and lift straight up as if you were being pulled up by the top of your head by a pulley or puppet string (See Figure 24).

Bending over and lifting at the waist (See Figure 23) will strain your back muscles and cause you to have pain, sometimes right away, sometimes the next day, sometimes when doing something as simple as reaching for a pen. When this happens, the best case scenario is that you are sore and have trouble moving around. In this situation you are shifting weight to other muscles, causing them to tighten up while they are compensating for the first injury. Worst case scenario is a hernia or disc herniation which causes the discs in the back to pop out of place and press on nerves going down the legs. This can cause tingling, pain, or numbness, which can be constant or transient, on one side or both sides. In some cases this can be resolved by conservative methods such as chiropractic, acupuncture, or physical therapy. Sometimes a cortisone shot can give some quick though temporary relief. In severe cases, surgery may be required. In any case, these problems can usually be avoided by following proper lifting procedures.

Many companies are making smaller heads these days. These heads are easy to move for smaller gigs and have plenty of punch. Combo units have come a long way and in most situations you can still get your sound with a minimum of gear. They also require a minimum

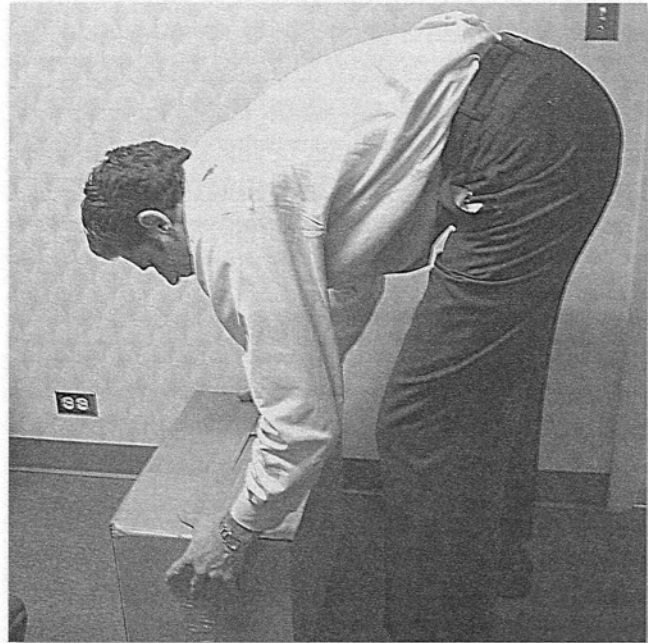


Figure 23. Bad lifting technique.

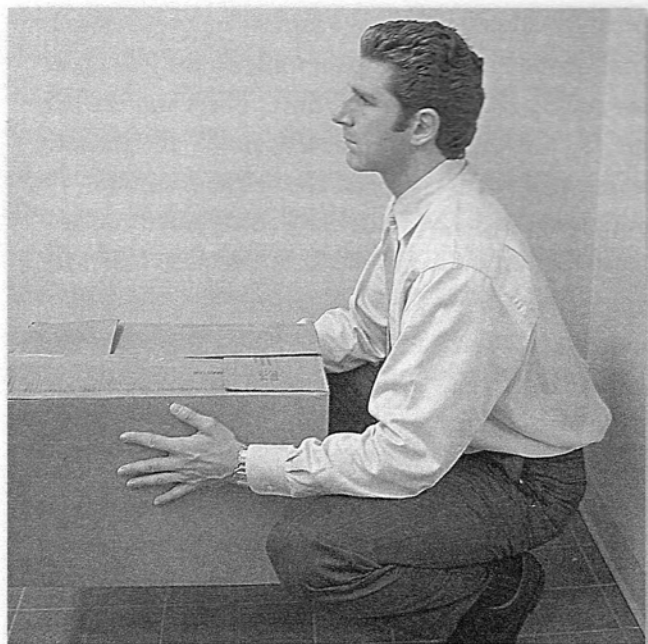


Figure 24. Good lifting technique.

of lifting and carrying. Several manufacturers are making cabinets and heads lighter without sacrificing the sound. Try going direct into the p.a. when possible.

In addition to heavy lifting, try to avoid sudden or wrenching movements or turning the wrong way when lifting. This can be equally detrimental with either light or heavy objects due to the odd angles and stresses placed on the muscles, as well as the muscle stresses that have already been built up. This is especially important