



Fortunately, most of us have the convenience of an automatic door opener to assist us with the task of lifting a heavy garage door. But what happens if the door opener suddenly fails or for those who do not have a automatic door opener? Opening garage doors can very easily set you up for a bend/twist type spinal injury unless we use good lifting technique. Lets review three variations of a POWERLIFT® for this task.

The first involves a standard wide stance POWERLIFT® technique. Note in the illustration that as the lifter stands in a wide stance, his left foot is close to the door and the right foot away. This puts him at an angle to the load to be lifted for better access. Note also, that his right hand is resting on his right thigh for added strength. This is called **bridging** and can greatly aid you when lifting heavy objects. Once in this position, it is relatively easy to go forward at the hip sockets and reach the garage door handle with your left hand to initiate the lift. A small detail that is oftentimes overlooked in this process is that our lifter has his left shoulder resting against the door, which adds further to his lifting strength. Once this set up is arranged, the powerful leg muscles can lift the door taking all of the strain off of the back.

The second illustration shows a simple variation of the bridging technique. Here, our lifter is bridging with his right hand against the door. He continues with wide stance, left foot close, right foot farther away and with the left shoulder leaning against the door. This is a great technique but requires that the garage door be relatively clean. If the door is wet, full of mud or somehow soiled, use the bridging technique with your hand on your leg and avoid leaning your left shoulder into the door. This still will give you a powerful lift although not quite as strong as when your shoulder is allowed to lean against the door.

The third technique utilizes the **Tripod Lift**. As seen in the last illustration, our lifter is down on the left knee with the left hand on the door handle. The right hand is bridging on the garage door. This setup will allow for a very powerful Tripod Lift on the door. The only limiting factor is that to get the door all the way open one must rise from the Tripod stance into a POWERLIFT® stance in order to increase your reach.

Note that any of these lifts can be accomplished using the right hand on the door instead of the left hand. Simply set yourself up facing the opposite direction for the lift. Opening garage doors is only one of the five thousand lifts we typically do each month. We can eliminate our backs from those jobs one lift at a time and what better place to start than at your own garage door.

OPENING THE GARAGE DOOR