



## PACKING LOW CUPBOARDS

Even something as innocent looking as packing up the contents of a low cupboard can lead to repetitive back stress. This is not because the items you are pulling out of the cupboard are heavy. Instead, it is the need to support the weight of your upper body as you handle the items. As seen in the first illustration, this individual is supporting the entire weight of his upper body with his back, plus the weight of the items he is pulling out of the cupboard. He is using his body in a back lift mode.

There are several ways to overcome this problem, the most common of which is to assume a squat stance as seen in the second illustration. Here our worker is using his legs for the job and not his back. One problem with this method however, is that it requires good knee joints. If you have arthritic knees, this simply won't work well for you.

The third illustration shows the best method. This is the Tripod position. The Tripod gets you close to the load without using your back, and it allows your hip sockets freedom of movement. In this way, as you move items from the cupboard to the box, the hips provide the lateral motion needed to reach over to the box. As seen in our first two illustrations, when you are in a back lift stance that lateral motion is taken up by the back or becomes very restricted when you are on the balls of your feet in a squat stance. Using a Tripod stance creates the least amount of work for your back, allows your hips to provide mobility, and generally requires less physical exertion than any other technique.