



Proper Use of Jacks

Most people do not use a jack to lift a load on a daily basis. Nonetheless, even if done only occasionally, everyone involved should be familiar with some basic safety precautions. These tips apply when lifting a 100-ton machine or lifting your car.

- Inspect the jack and check its capacity. Know the weight of the load. Do not lift a load heavier than the capacity of the jacking device.
- Prepare a proper foundation. When lifting a load on a jack, the weight becomes concentrated on the base. This can push the jack through the surface. Be especially careful on naturally soft surfaces, such as wooden planks, asphalt or dirt. Spread the weight over a larger area by setting the jack on a hardwood blocking. The foundation surface should be clean and level so the jack remains perpendicular to the load.
- To prevent the jack from slipping, do not permit metal-to-metal contact between the jack head and the load. Place a wood block, preferably hardwood, longer and wider than the face of the jack head, between the jack head and the load.
- Do not use “extenders.” If the jack cannot reach as high as you need, use a larger jack or block the jack up higher. Along the same line, never use “cheater bars” to work mechanical-type jacks.
- Keep the lift vertical by centering the load and the base on a level surface. If lifting the load high enough that it does not remain parallel to the base, use jacks on all sides or lift one side a safe amount, block the load, and then raise the other side. In other words, walk the load up.
- After raising the load, remove the handle. Many jack-related accidents are caused by simply tripping over the handle. If the handle cannot be removed, as with a floor jack, keep the handle in the up position and mark it to increase its visibility.
- Keep out from under any raised load. This includes your hands and feet in addition to another part of your body. Do not rely on the jacks alone to support a raised load. Use proper stands or blocking instead.

Jacks are very useful mechanical aids when used properly and safely!

