

Strain Prevention: Handling Toilets

Toilets are heavy, awkward, and hard to grip. The tank alone is typically between 25 and 40 pounds, while the bowl is 50 pounds or more — meaning an entire toilet weighs 70 to 100 pounds, and that weight isn't distributed evenly.

Lifting and moving a toilet requires preparation to avoid serious strains or other injuries. Take a minute to plan first: Can you lift the toilet safely? Where are you going? Do you have room to sit the bowl and tank down? It's critical to plan the right steps to safely move the bowl into position and not get caught trying to set it down while reaching over a counter or into a tight location.

Never attempt to lift a toilet alone when the tank and bowl are connected. They are simply too heavy and awkward to lift alone and can cause a serious strain injury. If there's no one available to help support the weight of the toilet, separate the tank and bowl, if possible, and **move each part individually**.

Bending over while standing increases the compression in your lower back, even if you are lifting nothing, let alone a toilet bowl or tank. **Kneel and use your legs to get close to a load you're trying to pick up**, and keep your spine properly aligned for the best body position.

Empty the bowl and tank completely as spilling water will make objects slippery and cause a distraction that could lead to you dropping the toilet.

Get a secure grip on the tank or bowl. Bowls especially have uneven weight. You can slightly lift or move the bowl to make sure your hands are in the best position for a move and to help keep the load close to your body. It's critical to remember that forces on the lower back and shoulders increase as your hands are forced away from your body. Keep the bowl and tank close to your body at all times.

Never twist! Use your feet to step in the direction that you want to go and keep the load in front of your body.

Move smoothly and avoid sudden jerking to lift and set the bowl and tank in place.

Although it's instinctive, **do not try to catch falling objects.** The force on your body from catching a heavy falling object can cause a serious injury.