

Position your elbows just six inches closer to your side to cut the force in half every time you reach, lift, carry, push or pull.



Green zone

Leverage is better when the load is closer.

As the load gets closer to your body, your leverage increases. This means your muscles do less work when you lift in the green zone. Your muscles must do much more work to lift the same object in your red zone.



Yellow zone

When your elbows move away from your side in any direction, you are working in your yellow zone.

The outer limit of the yellow zone is about six inches out from your side. The force on your shoulder and upper back can more than double when your elbow is in this position.



Red zone

Stop and think: How can I get my elbows just 6 inches closer?

As your elbows move farther out into the red zone, the strain moves to the joints of the low back. Some of these muscles have very poor leverage. In fact, in the far red zone, handling a 10-pound load can result in up to 500-pounds of force on your low back.