

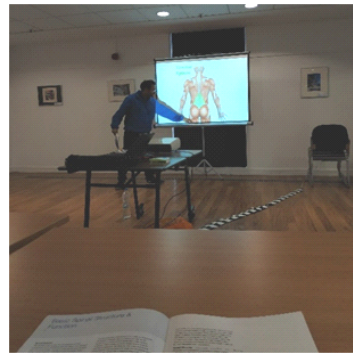
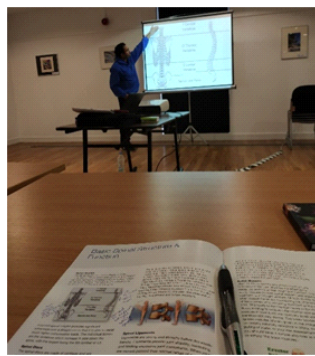


# My Experience at Osteopathic Solutions 2 Day Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course

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written by Emma Farrell, Training Administrator & Social Media Manager

Osteopathic Solutions' 2 Day Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course is run at the Harlequin Centre, Redhill (pictured in the left photo above) by our London based Manual Handling Expert & Registered Osteopath, Rishi Patel (pictured alongside myself in the middle image above). I attended this course recently on the 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018. I arrived at the Harlequin Centre venue just before 9am and made my way straight into the training room to meet Rishi Patel and the other attendees. One of the attendees was a Health & Safety Officer for East Sussex College and the other was a Health & Safety Manager for a company called Colorcon, a medical manufacturer. To commence Day 1, we all introduced ourselves briefly, our backgrounds, and how Manual Handling played a roll in our work. The Health & Safety Manager from Colorcon explained how she had suffered with back pain over the years due to all of the hazardous Manual Handling tasks carried out within her work role and having not received sufficient Manual Handling training in her early years. We then had a short discussion about her symptoms and what type of tasks her job role entailed on a daily basis. Her and her colleagues all had tasks which seemed hazardous as they involve a lot of lifting and lowering of heavy items repetitively, and with spinal twisting, so it was great that she was present in the training to be able to return her Manual Handling training knowledge gained on this course to her colleagues; keeping her factory floor BackSafe.



To commence the theory side of the training, Rishi Patel our Manual Handling trainer delivered a power point presentation detailing basic spinal structure and function as well as anatomy of the spine, linked with the Osteopathic Solutions Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course booklet in which we received with the course. I found this area of the training very interesting, and also important to know, especially to those delivering Manual Handling Practical training to their workforce. We then watched some examples of hazardous lifting and lowering of loads being carried out on factory floors. This encouraged us to have a group discussion on why the task was so hazardous and how manual handling risks could be reduced. Linked with the hazardous practice Manual Handling videos and basic spinal biomechanics, Rishi also showed us some interesting scans (MRI & X-ray) of a spinal column with disc injuries, again, encouraging engagement and group discussion. Having this knowledge under our belts was a great foundation to enter the practical area of this highly practical Manual Handling Train the Trainer Course. After looking through the relevant laws relating to Manual Handling, basic spinal anatomy and biomechanics, and hazardous lifting, carrying and lowering practice videos it was time for lunch. The Harlequin Centre was centrally located in Redhill town centre, near to all cafes, restaurants and shops so we only had to walk across the road to a lovely cafe called 'West Central' (pictured below left) where myself and the attendees had lunch over the course days.



After lunch it was time to jump straight into practical learning. Rishi had a great variation of loads of different shapes, sizes and weights lined up within the training room. The first Manual Handling task to practise was BackSafe Lifting and Lowering of Loads between waist and floor level. For this task a squat lift needed to be carried out which involved, firstly, assessing the load by either giving it a tap or rocking it with your hands to 'test' its weight. It was then essential to choose the safest and most comfortable place to grip the load. Having approached the load and choosing the safest place to grip, we had to position our feet symmetrically, slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Also mentioned by Rishi; the farther the load is from the body the more forward bending will be involved with more use of lower back muscles, which is what we don't want. In regards to hip and knee movement, good mobility is essential. The majority of the power in the squat technique comes from the powerful leg muscles. With one swift movement, we then powered up, 'pushing the floor away' keeping the load controlled and close, completing the lift.

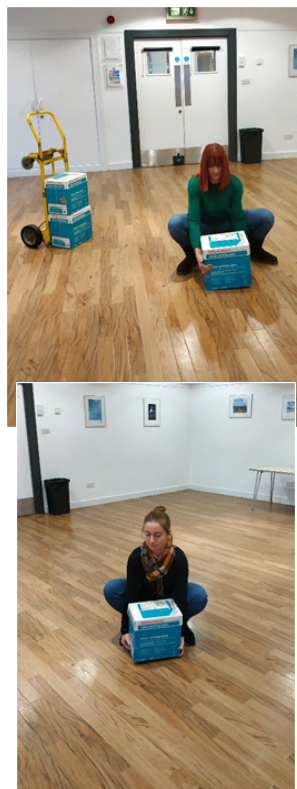


One by one we all practised our technique using heavy boxes of paper stacked on top of one another, perfectly positioned to perform load lifting between waist and floor level. After each task, we constructively critiqued one another's performance ensuring we all fully grasped the task. As with lifting, lowering the load down to its destination also needed to be addressed, which was completed simply by repeating what we did to lift, but in reverse.

Depending on the weight of the load, as mentioned by Rishi, we may have needed to readjust the positioning of the load after placing it down. Rishi asked us to then explain how hazardous lifting may sometimes get carried out which encouraged a discussion amongst us. Rishi also mentioned that traditionally (and still) lifting practice has had no regulation within the UK and Rishi demonstrated the many flawed practices which are taught from Health & Safety Training Companies and even the Manual Handling guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). HSE lifting guidance actually places the lower back in a near horizontal position with the load being mainly lifted by the lower back muscles and could actually lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), which may surprise you. To view our Squat Lifting and Lowering Explainer Video view our Manual Handling Techniques Explained page on [www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk](http://www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk) With that said, it was important for attendees to absorb as much knowledge as possible over the course of the 2 days ensuring Best Practice, BackSafe, Task Specific and Habit Changing manual handling training for some of the UK's workforce.



Although my daily routine doesn't involve any Manual Handling tasks, it was still vital for me to absorb as much knowledge as possible within the 2 days of the Course in order to enhance my important work within Osteopathic Solutions. My day to day tasks involve administration, course certificate management, social media, email mail shot marketing, writing of case studies/ blogs and website work so when describing Manual Handling techniques and other areas of the subject matter, it is truly important that I have a great understanding of every aspect of Manual Handling.





Back to the training! After perfecting the semi squat to the best of my abilities it was then time to move on to another technique, the full squat. Similar to the semi squat technique, as described above, it was important to keep ourselves close to the load, ensuring a good hold on it with the feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. A bend through the hips and knees was required with the only difference for this technique being that we had to lower ourselves further to the floor, as expected with the title 'Full Squat lift'. Rishi performed his best practice Full Squat technique for us to absorb before we all took turns to carry it out ourselves. My worst habit while completing these techniques was probably not having my head in the recommended neutral positioning as you will see from the full squat picture on page 3 of this blog, but with plenty of attempts I eventually learned to tilt my head forward slightly as having it directly looking forward, as mentioned by Rishi, places the neck into a backward bend position and therefore places strain on the lower neck joints.

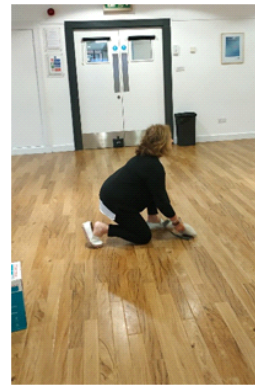
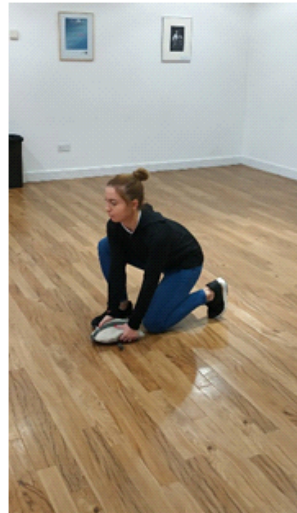
Can you notice the technique errors in the photos above? Email me at [emmafarrell@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk](mailto:emmafarrell@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk) and if correct we can email you the Course Booklet free of charge.

After going through the lifting and lowering phase of the full squat lift thoroughly and again discussing common squat lifting and lowering errors, our next task to address was the lunge lift. The lunge to lift and lower loads is an alternative to the squat technique that is commonly preferred by people who are experiencing a spinal disc injury/ or have experienced one. I learned that it should only be practised with small moderate weight loads up to 10kg. Out of all of the lifts, I probably found I had to think about this one the most when carrying it out. In line with the Osteopathic Solutions Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course Booklet in which we received with the training, the technique involves the following:

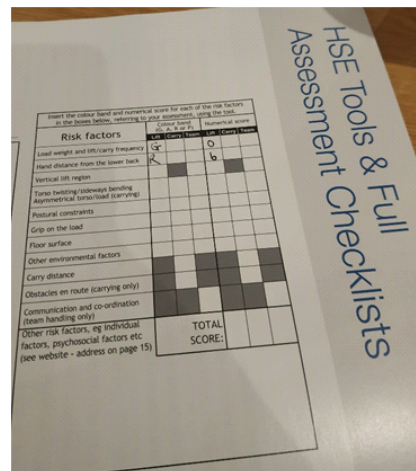
Lunge forward with one leg placing the foot to the side of the load. The front knee is in a position of approximately 90 degrees flexion. The rear kneecap is now touching the floor. The rear foot extends across the toe joints. The load is then lifted with both arms and held close to the stomach/ lower chest. The lift is then powered predominantly by the front leg quadriceps and glutes with an additional push off from the rear foot. The load is kept close to the stomach/ lower chest during the lift. To lower the load down take a controlled, large step forward with the same leg that was the front leg during the lift, keeping the load close to the body. Bend through the front leg hip and knee, with the rear leg knee cap resting on the ground, with the rear foot toes again extended. The load is then lowered with both arms with a moderate forward bend of the back.

As you can see from the text above, the Osteopathic Solutions Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course Booklet explains everything in great detail for those needing to learn the subject matter to a high standard in order to train their workforce effectively. Before we finished up for Day 1 we also looked at some hazardous (yet common) single handed lifting practices and other unsafe carrying techniques.

Below in the images we are all practising our Lunge Lift technique. This is phase 1 of the lift. To see phase 2 of the lift please view our Lunge Lifting and Lowering Explainer Video view our Manual Handling Techniques Explained page on [www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk](http://www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk)



With Day 1 complete it was on to Day 2 for a short bit of theory that morning. As this course is designed for the attendees to teach their workforce, linked with the Manual Handling Instructor Course booklet, Rishi went through the delivery of a 2 hour Manual Handling Practical Skills Course with the group. After the other attendees asked questions about the training delivery, he then pointed us to a useful section of the book titled 'Handling Attendee Questions/Objections' which detailed commonly asked questions for those delivering training in which their course attendees may ask. With this area complete, it was then on to some HSE tools and full assessment checklists to assess the severity of workplace tasks and display a numerical score using the tools.



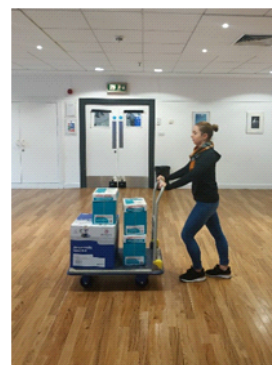
The Osteopathic Solutions Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course booklet has all of the pages required to carry out these tools removed ready for use for those carrying out the training. The MAC, ART and RAPP Tools were all covered with Rishi as we watched videos of employees carrying out hazardous Manual Handling tasks and marked each risk factor. We also looked at the REBA tool which is an Employee Assessment Worksheet which analyses the positioning of body parts when carrying out tasks and delivers a final score, whether the task is low, medium, or very high risk resulting in a recommended change to be implemented. Lastly, as we were just about to move on to practical training, Rishi sourced a very interesting video for us to watch and discuss called 'Child's Play' (image taken from clip below). I had never seen this before and I found it very interesting in the fact that young children naturally have very good manual handling technique and it's only when they spend time around us adults that they develop some bad manual handling habits! I would recommend watching this for those of you who haven't seen it. Although, please be mindful that Child's Play demonstrates major errors in lifting practice, even when they are trying to say this is correct lifting practice. Email me at [emmafarrell@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk](mailto:emmafarrell@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk) and I can email what errors these are, and why.



After the theory side of things were complete, it was back to the all important practical training. Next, pushing and pulling of loads. Rishi commenced our lesson with 'How might an employee push and pull a load in an unsafe manner?' Although I am not hugely familiar with factory environments (although after this, please view my blog " Lights, Camera, Action! Our Bespoke Manual Handling DVD filming at British Pepper " on this blog page), I had seen many useful videos displaying unsafe manual handling techniques and was therefore able to display hazardous methods such as forward bending the spine and mainly using upper body muscles and bodyweight to move the load forward as demonstrated by Rishi below.



Similar to the squat lifting and lowering, the power for this task comes from the leg muscles. The recommended BackSafe method as mentioned by Rishi was to face the load with one foot in front of the other, placing feet at your normal hip width apart, bending both knees to a semi-squat, placing hands safely on the load, keeping elbows close to the body and finally, keeping your spine upright, looking forward. Below in the pictures, we are perfecting our pushing technique with Rishi assisting the first attendee on the far left picture. It was important to note that many loads that people push and pull within their working environment can vary, but with the help of the pushing and pulling risk assessment RAPP tool score sheet and the pushing and pulling HSE Checklist, the musculoskeletal severity of pushing and pulling tasks can be easily assessed.



Next, it was time to look at pulling tasks. We firstly looked at common methods of unsafe pulling of loads. The most common unsafe pulling technique as a lot of us may know is:

Taking a narrow stance sideways to the load, gripping the load with one hand, forward bending and twisting the spine and using shoulder muscles to pull the load.

From my experience as we spoke about this I recalled in the past seeing binmen dragging bins across pavements using this hazardous method. We also spoke about awkward pushing and pulling tasks in relation to videos in which we had watched the previous day.



After a trip outside to the goods in area to practice pushing and pulling of a trolley (pictured in the photo above left), it was now time to practise BackSafe pulling technique. Facing the load enables us to control the movement of the load and generally does not involve as much use of body weight compared to pulling facing away from the load. Similar to the pushing technique explained above, it was important to face the load, place feet at normal hip width apart, bend both knees to a semi squat, place hands safely on the load while keeping elbows close to your body. In the right photo above, I am demonstrating this technique. The key principle was to keep your spine upright and avoid any backward bend. If the task and environment enforces the need to face away from the load, the body positioning was similar aside from hand positioning which was now placed safely on the load behind you, before driving your body forward with your legs.

The last area to cover before our formal Practical & Written Assessment was team lifting and lowering. Many loads are not suitable to be lifted by one person, like pallets for example, simply because they are hard to grip or hard to manoeuvre due to their size. Shown in the photos below, as a group we were demonstrating the various methods of team lifting. For this exercise, the first thing to do was nominate a team leader. The team leader is important as they coordinate the lift, carry and lower of the task. Together, we discussed the factors to consider when carrying out this task. It was important to ensure that:

- There is enough space for handlers to manoeuvre as a group
- The members of your team are of similar height, size and strength in order for the lift to run smoothly
- The weight is evenly distributed and everybody is clear on where the load needs to go
- The team leader specifies that lifting will occur on the word 'Lift' in the command 'Ready, Brace, Lift.'
- To set the load down again, the team leader issues the command 'Ready, Brace, Down'





The last thing on our agenda of this 2 Day Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Course accredited with City & Guilds was to take our formal Practical & Written Assessment. We firstly had a Written Assessment, which was actually quite challenging. It was important to know some of the terms in which we were taught within the theory of this course and luckily, I remembered most of them! (Phew). We also had to watch a few videos as part of this test and answer questions relating to employees tasks and how we could make them more 'BackSafe.' For the practical part of our assessments we were required to talk through and demonstrate all of the Manual Handling techniques in which we had learned throughout the course. I have just been given my results and thankfully passed the assessment with B grade, which our Director Gareth Milner said is an excellent score for such an intensive 2 Day Course.

Overall I found this course to be very engaging considering its subject matter. There are many Manual Handling Courses out there that subject their attendees to watching endless, uninteresting videos and power points with minimal and poor quality levels of practical. I felt this was a Manual Handling Course with a difference. Our Trainer and Manual Handling Expert Rishi Patel made our training days very interesting by showing us fascinating slides on spinal biomechanics as well as a variation of real life videos taken in different industries. Although the course was highly practical, when it came to the theory he frequently raised group discussion amongst us by asking our opinions, therefore encouraging a high level of engagement and interest amongst us as a group. The practical side of the course cleverly ensured we perfected our technique fully as we repeated it and helpfully critique one another's performance until we were all fully clear. Bad practice Manual Handling and its dangers on the Musculoskeletal system were also covered in our practical sessions which helped us truly understand and retain why it is so important to put our full Manual Handling knowledge into action upon leaving the course. I would highly recommend this Course to anyone on the lookout for a high quality Manual Handling training provider.