English Stonelifting

Stone Lifting Guidance and Safety Policy

Policy	**Stone Lifting Guidance and Safety Policy**
Organisation	English Stonelifting
Status	Current Policy
Version	1.0
Effective Date	September 2026
Policy Owner	English Stonelifting
Review Frequency	Periodic review, and following relevant changes to official guidance or identified safety considerations
Applies To	Recreational attempts to lift stones listed, mapped or otherwise referenced by English Stonelifting
Primary Purpose	To promote careful, responsible and risk-aware stone lifting
Important	English Stonelifting does not supervise, coach, organise or control individual lifting attempts and does not guarantee that any listed stone is safe or suitable to lift.

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1. Purpose and Scope

English Stonelifting promotes the recreational lifting of natural stones while recognising that lifting heavy or unstable objects can involve significant physical and environmental risks.

This policy provides guidance for individuals considering an attempt to lift a stone listed or referenced by English Stonelifting.

It is intended to complement the **Responsible Stonelifting Policy**, which sets out requirements concerning land access, permissions, conservation, heritage and environmental protection.

This policy does not constitute medical, professional lifting, coaching or safety advice and does not remove the responsibility of the individual to assess the circumstances of their own lifting attempt.

2. Responsibility of the Lifter

Every individual is responsible for deciding whether they should attempt a particular lift.

Before attempting a lift, participants should consider:

- Their own physical ability, experience and preparation.
- The weight, shape and stability of the stone.
- The condition of the stone and any cracks, fractures or unstable sections.
- The surface on which the stone is resting.
- The surrounding ground and potential fall area.
- Weather and environmental conditions.
- The presence of other people, animals, vehicles or property.
- Whether the stone can be safely approached, lifted and replaced.
- Whether any equipment or assistance is required.

The inclusion of a stone on the English Stonelifting website, map, register or social media channels does not constitute an instruction, recommendation or guarantee that the stone is safe or suitable to lift.

Participants should not attempt a lift where they reasonably consider the risks to be unacceptable.

2.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

[2] GOV.UK – UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines

[3] NHS – Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64

3. Physical Preparation and Capability

Stone lifting can involve considerable physical exertion. Participants should ensure that they are appropriately prepared for the activity and should consider their existing level of fitness, experience and ability before attempting a lift.[1][2]

Anyone who has not exercised for some time, has a medical condition or has concerns about their ability to undertake strenuous physical activity should consider seeking advice from a GP or appropriately qualified healthcare professional before participating.[1]

Participants should not attempt a lift simply because another person has successfully lifted the same stone. Individual ability, technique, conditions and circumstances vary.

3.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] NHS – Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64

[2] GOV.UK – UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines

4. Assessing the Stone

A stone should be assessed before every lifting attempt.

Participants should consider whether the stone is:

- Stable in its resting position.
- Free-standing and accessible without excavation or digging.
- Free from obvious cracks, fractures or loose sections.
- Resting on ground capable of supporting the lifting attempt.
- Free from hazards such as unstable surrounding stones or structures.
- Capable of being returned safely to its original position.

Participants should not attempt to excavate, dig out or otherwise alter the stone or surrounding ground in order to make a lift possible.

Where the condition or stability of a stone is uncertain, the lift should not be attempted.

5. Assessing the Surrounding Area

The area surrounding the stone should be checked before lifting.

Participants should ensure that there is sufficient space to approach and handle the stone without placing themselves or others in unnecessary danger.

Particular attention should be given to:

- Sloping or uneven ground.
- Wet, icy or loose surfaces.
- Drops, cliffs, steep slopes or water.
- Walls, fences, buildings or other structures.
- Roads, tracks and vehicle routes.
- Other stones or objects that could move unexpectedly.
- Livestock, wildlife, dogs or members of the public.
- The area into which the stone could fall or roll.

Other people should be kept clear of the immediate lifting area where reasonably necessary.

6. Grip Aids and Stone Surface Protection

Where grip assistance is required, participants may use **powdered chalk only**.

Tacky, liquid chalk, resin, rosin, glue, wax, adhesives, oils, gels or any other grip-enhancing substance must not be applied to the surface of a natural lifting stone.

Participants must not apply, attach or otherwise introduce any substance or material to the stone for the purpose of improving grip, marking the stone or altering its surface.

Chalk should be used sparingly and only where necessary. Participants should avoid unnecessary application to the stone or surrounding ground and should leave the stone substantially as it was found following the lifting attempt.

The use of grip aids must not result in permanent staining, surface alteration, contamination or damage to the stone.

Where a stone is known to be particularly porous, historically significant, fragile or otherwise sensitive to contamination, participants should avoid applying chalk unless its use has been expressly permitted by the relevant landowner or responsible authority.

6.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

[2] Historic England – Heritage protection and advice

7. Lifting Technique and Manual Handling

Participants should use a lifting method appropriate to the stone and their own ability.

Heavy or awkward objects can present risks of musculoskeletal injury and other physical harm. Participants should avoid attempting lifts that exceed their experience or capability.[1]

Where a stone requires a technique, equipment or level of supervision beyond the participant's experience, appropriate instruction or assistance should be obtained before attempting the lift.

Participants should avoid:

- Attempting a lift beyond their capability.
- Using uncontrolled or excessively rapid movements.
- Placing hands, feet or other body parts where they could become trapped.
- Standing in the likely path of a falling or rolling stone.

- Continuing a lift after losing control of the stone.
- Using damaged or unsuitable equipment.

7.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] Health and Safety Executive – Manual handling at work

8. Spotters, Assistance and Supervision

Where appropriate, participants should consider having another competent person present when attempting a lift.

A second person may assist with observing hazards, keeping others away from the lifting area or providing practical assistance where appropriate.

However, the presence of another person does not guarantee that a lift is safe and does not transfer responsibility for the decision to attempt the lift.

Where organised instruction, coaching or supervision is provided, the organiser or provider is responsible for establishing appropriate arrangements for the activity.

9. Equipment and Aids

Any equipment used during a lifting attempt should be suitable for its intended purpose, in good condition and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Equipment should not be used to create a lifting opportunity where doing so would damage the stone, surrounding ground or environment.

The use of equipment does not remove the requirement to establish appropriate landowner permission, access rights or other necessary consents.

Participants should not install permanent equipment, fixtures, anchors or other infrastructure at a stone without appropriate permission.

10. The Lift

Before commencing a lift, participants should have considered how the stone will be approached, lifted, controlled and safely returned.

Participants should:

1. Check the stone and surrounding area.
2. Confirm that access and permissions are appropriate.
3. Establish where the stone could move if control is lost.
4. Keep unnecessary people clear.
5. Use a controlled lifting method appropriate to the stone.

6. Stop immediately if the stone becomes unstable or the situation changes.
7. Return the stone carefully following the attempt.

A successful lift does not justify repeating an attempt where conditions have changed or where further attempts could increase the risk of injury or environmental damage.

11. Dropping, Rolling and Loss of Control

A stone should never intentionally be dropped, thrown or rolled where doing so could create a risk to people, property, livestock, vegetation, habitats or the surrounding landscape.

If a participant loses control of a stone, they should prioritise moving themselves and others away from the potential path of the stone rather than attempting to regain control at personal risk.

Following any uncontrolled movement, participants should check whether the stone, surrounding ground or nearby property has been damaged and take appropriate action where necessary.

12. Returning the Stone

Where a stone has been temporarily moved during a lifting attempt, it should be returned carefully to substantially the same position and condition from which it was found, unless an alternative arrangement has been expressly agreed with the relevant landowner or land manager.

Participants should not leave stones in locations where they could obstruct paths, access routes, gates, roads, buildings or other facilities.

If a stone cannot safely be returned to its original position, participants should avoid creating additional hazards and should notify the relevant landowner or land manager where appropriate.

This requirement complements the environmental and land-management principles set out in the Responsible Stonelifting Policy.

13. Weather and Environmental Conditions

Lifting should be postponed where weather or ground conditions create additional or unacceptable risks.

Particular caution should be exercised during:

- Heavy rain.
- Ice or snow.
- Strong winds.

- Extreme heat or cold.
- Poor visibility.
- Flooding or saturated ground.

Participants should also consider whether their activity could cause additional erosion, vegetation damage or disturbance to wildlife.

14. Children and Young People

Children and young people should only participate where the activity is appropriate for their age, physical ability and experience.

A parent, guardian or responsible adult should determine whether participation is appropriate and provide suitable supervision where necessary.

English Stonelifting does not organise, supervise or provide coaching to children or young people.

Any organised activity involving children or young people remains the responsibility of the organiser, who should ensure that appropriate safeguarding, supervision, health and safety and risk-management arrangements are in place.[1][2]

14.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Using after-school clubs, tuition and community activities

[2] GOV.UK – Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers

15. Injury or Emergency

If an injury or other emergency occurs, participants should prioritise immediate safety and obtain appropriate emergency assistance.

Participants should not continue lifting following an injury or where continuing could worsen the situation.

Where appropriate, incidents involving significant injury, damage to property, environmental damage or an unsafe stone should be reported to the relevant landowner, land manager or emergency service.

English Stonelifting should also be informed where the incident may affect the continued publication or suitability of a listed stone.

16. Responsibility and Liability

English Stonelifting is a documentation, information and mapping platform and does not organise, supervise or control individual stonelifting attempts.

Participation in stonelifting is undertaken at the participant's own risk.

English Stonelifting does not accept responsibility for injury, illness, death, loss or damage arising from participation, except where liability cannot lawfully be excluded or limited.[1][2]

Nothing in this policy is intended to exclude or restrict any liability that cannot lawfully be excluded or restricted.[1][2]

The publication of a stone does not constitute a representation that the stone is safe, stable, accessible or suitable for lifting.

16.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Writing a fair contract for customers

[2] GOV.UK – Unfair contract terms (CMA37)

17. Reporting Unsafe Stones

English Stonelifting encourages participants, landowners, land managers and members of the public to report stones or locations that may present an unexpected or unacceptable risk.

Reports may include:

- Unstable or damaged stones.
- Changes to access.
- Erosion or ground deterioration.
- Damage to surrounding land.
- Changes in ownership or permission.
- New hazards.
- Stones that have been moved or altered.
- Incidents or near misses.

English Stonelifting may temporarily suspend, amend or remove a stone listing where safety concerns have been raised or where the available information is no longer considered sufficiently reliable.

18. Publication Does Not Guarantee Safety

Information published by English Stonelifting is based on information available at the time of publication and may become outdated.

Stone weight, condition, accessibility, surrounding terrain, land ownership, permissions and environmental conditions may change.

Participants must make their own assessment immediately before attempting a lift and must not rely solely upon photographs, descriptions, previous successful lifts or information published by English Stonelifting.

19. Responsible Lifting Principles

English Stonelifting encourages four simple principles:

1. Assess the lift.
Understand the stone, the surroundings and your own ability.

2. Control the lift.
Use an appropriate and controlled method and stop if circumstances become unsafe.

3. Protect the stone and land.
Avoid damage, disturbance, uncontrolled movement and unnecessary repetition.

4. Leave no trace.
Return the stone and surrounding area substantially to the condition in which they were found.

20. Relationship with the Responsible Stonelifting Policy

This policy should be read alongside the **Responsible Stonelifting Policy**.

The Responsible Stonelifting Policy addresses matters including:

- Land access and permissions.
- Open-access land.
- Private land.
- Landowner and land-manager rights.
- Heritage and conservation.
- Environmental impact.
- Stone removal, relocation and placement.
- Publication and mapping.

This policy addresses considerations relating specifically to the physical act of attempting to lift a stone.

Compliance with one policy does not remove the requirements of the other.

21. Policy Review

English Stonelifting will periodically review this policy in light of changes to official guidance, identified risks, participant feedback, landowner feedback and experience gained through the operation of the platform.

Where necessary, individual stones, locations or categories of lifting activity may be removed, restricted or suspended while the policy is reviewed or updated.