



Daily driver care

U C health & safety

Your business, from every angle



ISO 14001

Company Environment

“We respect the environment in all our activities.”

Starting with design and during the manufacturing and maintenance process – we reduce our carbon footprint throughout the whole life cycle of our products.

Our factories in Gothenburg and Pamplona are certified – SS-EN ISO 14001 & SS-EN ISO 9001.





Before it's too late

This is a booklet about the most important thing we have.
[Our health.](#)

It is about how a good warehouse should look and how a good truck should be designed to minimise damage in the form of wear and accidents. It provides tips and advice on what to do and, most importantly, exercises to prevent pain.

The whole point of UniCarriers Active is to prevent problems. Before it's too late.

The exercises have been designed by Birgitta Lövdahl, a licensed physiotherapist specialising in OMT Level 2, and are divided into five sections for operators of order pickers, side seated trucks, counterbalance forklift trucks, stand-in stackers and pedestrian controlled trucks with foldable platform.

The exercises are specially designed to prevent the particular problems operators of these trucks are likely to suffer from.

Completing an exercise session takes no more than about 10–15 minutes, and the exercises are easy to perform correctly. That quarter of an hour is time well spent.

Combine the exercises with your own training in the gym, swimming, jogging or just with a long, invigorating walk. You probably have some form of discount card for preventive health care at your workplace, talk to your safety officer or your employer to find out what is available.



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The employer's responsibility

Workplaces with forklift trucks are over-represented in sick leave statistics. This is strange, because forklifts are becoming more ergonomic and safer.

The problem is that forklift work has become increasingly static. The work is monotonous and easily leads to repetitive strain injuries if nothing is done to prevent them. Accident-related sick leave is also increasing. Mostly because work tempo has increased.

The incentives to prevent injury are now greater. For example, when the Swedish Parliament passed proposal 2004/05:21, the responsibility of the employer for sick leave increased. Today, the employer pays 15% of sick pay costs for the employee. At the same time, employer contributions were reduced and sick pay time was shortened. In practice, the changes mean that employers with low sickness absence pay less than before.

In this booklet you will find practical advice and tips about how to easily reduce the risk of accidents and reduce unnecessary strains on the operators. It can be everything from recommended weight limits for picked goods to rack height and torque in goods handling.

There are exercises for the operators to prevent injury. The exercises are simple and take a quarter of an hour to complete. Our advice is to give the drivers that quarter of an hour every day. You will quickly make up the loss of time in the form of reduced sickness costs, increased satisfaction and efficiency.

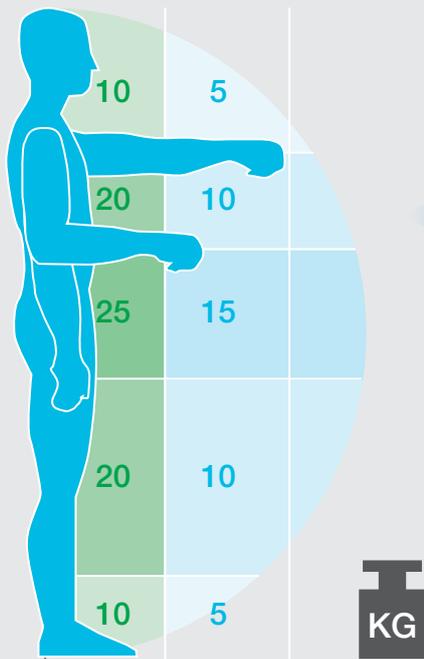
Fact box

Example: Sick leave costs in Sweden

An employee with an annual income of €24,700 costs the company €14,400 if he/she is on full-time sick leave for a year.

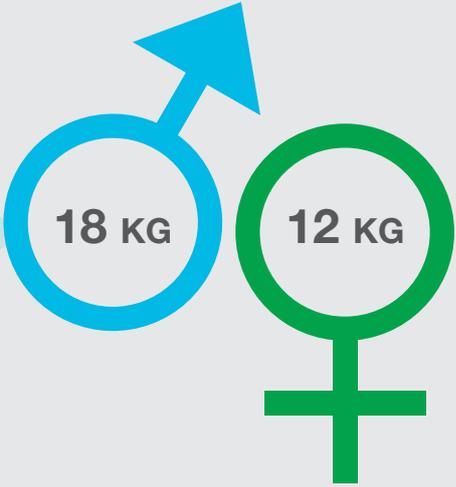
Our factories in Gothenburg and Pamplona are certified – SS-EN ISO 14001 & SS-EN ISO 9001. If sick leave is half-time for six months, the cost is €4,600. Source: Försäkringskassan (National Social Insurance Agency).





Warehouses with order picking are very different from other types of warehouse. Handling is completely different and the pressure on the individual operator is great. To reduce the strain on the picker, lifting outside the optimum lift sector has to be avoided.

If picking of heavy goods is required, be sure to introduce fixed picking locations where the picker has access to lifting aids. Think about the maximum weight! Men should never lift more than 18 kg, women no more than 12 kg.



Start from the right place

The best way to prevent injuries and accidents is to minimise risk and vulnerability as early as possible in the layout stage. A well thought-out and developed warehouse layout is the basis for an ergonomic and safe materials management organisation.

There are a few simple rules of thumb to keep in mind when building or altering a warehouse.

When stacking, wider aisles provide a better viewing angle than narrow aisles. They do not need to be much wider for the view to be significantly better.

In warehouses with narrow aisles and/or high lift heights, height pre-selection and/or a camera are good resources. It minimises the risk of damage to racks, goods and trucks, and makes the operator more efficient in a better ergonomic work environment.

Separating walking and truck lanes does not just increase safety, it also reduces stress levels in the warehouse. Mirrors in corners can also help.

There should be at least 2 metres free height to the first shelf in the racking when ground floor picking. Placing ground pallets at least 30 cm above floor level significantly reduces the strain on the picker's back.

An investment which appears costly but is often profitable, is to store goods side on (80 cm deep). The difference in torque for a picking depth of around 40 cm instead of 100 cm can be more than double. That is to say that your back takes more than twice as much punishment.

However, side-on handling reduces the number of pallet places by about 15%. It's possible to compromise by having all frequent picking locations long side facing, while the rest are still short side facing in special racks.

Another way to improve ergonomics is to install slide-out units. This is, however, a costly investment and the slide-out units are not always of the best quality.

Fact box

Goods, racking, and transport damage.

Different types of damage to goods account for far too much cost in many modern warehouses. It might be dropped pallets, overloaded racks that bend, or damage on trucks.

The best way to avoid accidents is to prevent them. Good warehouse design can go a long way in preventing accidents, as well as regular service and maintenance of forklifts and racking, and provision of information and training for operators.



Low and medium level order pickers

Tips for order pickers



Low level order picking is very intensive, both physically and in terms of time. Operators often work for some form of piece rate that creates a work environment that is not always ideal.

There is, however, much that can be done to aid order pickers in their work and both increase efficiency and reduce the risk of work-related injuries.

The weight and accessibility of the goods are fundamental. The maximum goods weight for effective handling is 18 kg for men and 12 kg for women. Any more than that means too great a strain on the body. Surveys show that an order picker can handle an incredible 10 to 15 tonnes of goods during a work session. It's therefore important that the order picker is in good physical condition.

If order picking is from level 2, the use of a truck with an operator lifting platform is a must. Handling is much more effective and the order picker avoids climbing up and down ladders, racking and the like.

Remember:

- Switch legs when you step off and on the truck.
- Stand with the same weight on both feet when you drive the truck. Preferably with slightly bent knees. It is important to get an even distribution of weight on the lower spine and to improve the back's response capacity for an emergency stop.
- Pull the goods near the pallet edge before lifting. During the lift, it is important to keep your back straight and the goods as close to your body as possible.

EXERCISE 1

Mobility of the neck and shoulders

Stretch an arm far forward. Stretch out your fingers on that arm and pull the other backwards with a clenched fist.

It is important not to arch your back when you do the exercise. Keep your body upright and look forward.

↻ Repeat about 6 times per arm



EXERCISE 3

Stretching the spine

Stand with your lower spine against a pillar or wall. Keep your feet a distance from the wall and with your knees slightly bent. Press your lower spine against the wall and then bend slowly forward with your head first, vertebrae by vertebrae until you are bent over. Your lower spine should always be in contact with the wall.

Maintain the stretch position for about 15 seconds.

↻ Repeat 3-4 times



EXERCISE 2

Strengthening the shoulder blades and upper back

Stand with your feet about 50 cm away from a wall. Use your hands as support at shoulder height and do press-ups.

Bend forward without arching your back and hold in your chin.

↻ Repeat
10 times



10–15 minutes

EXERCISE 4

Stretching the neck's side muscles

Tilt your head to the left, your nose should point straight forward. With your left hand, press down your right shoulder. Maintain the position for 15 seconds. Change sides.

↻ Repeat 3-4 times



These exercises have been specially designed following an analysis of drivers' movements for this specific type of truck.

The advice and exercises are designed to prevent injuries. The exercises should not be used for therapeutic purposes. Therapeutic exercises need to be individually tailored, especially for nerve-related problems emanating from the neck/shoulder area out to the arms, or from the lower spine giving sharp pain in the leg.

If you have repetitive strain injury – contact a licensed physiotherapist and ask if the exercises are tailored for your problem.



 Sideways-seated trucks

Keep your back free



Trucks with sideways-seating operators are available in the form of stackers, reach trucks, four-way trucks and more. The truck in itself is a smart ergonomic design that minimises truck area by the operator space being the same as the truck width.

The problem of trucks with sideways-seated operators is that the operator must turn their head to have full control of the forks and goods. It is therefore important to equip trucks with the technology available on the market to reduce strain on the neck and back. The truck should be equipped with a mini steering wheel and armrest. This has proven to be the most effective way to reduce strain on the operator.

Steering and controls are other important factors in order to create the best work environment. They should be located in the right place, without the operator having to stretch, and be easy to control.

Collisions are a common cause of accidents with sideways-seated trucks. The reason is simply that the operator does not have, and cannot have, a full view behind their back and so can easily misjudge distance. The easiest way to avoid this type of damage is to keep aisles and exits/entrances one-way.

A simple and inexpensive means of reducing the risk of accidents is to install rear-view mirrors. There are now good wide-angle mirrors on the market. Just make sure the mirrors are located in the correct place and are easy to adjust.

EXERCISE 1

Relieve your back

Sitting for too long compresses the discs in your spine. This exercise helps stretch them out.

Grab the top of an open door, keeping your feet on each side of the door panel. Relax your body and 'hang' from the door, so you feel your back stretching. Hold this position for around 5 seconds, and then return to the original position.

Remember! Your feet have to be on the floor. Try putting something under the door, so you don't break the hinges.

↻ Repeat 3 times

1



2



Remember:

- Look forward as soon as you have the chance, for example while waiting, in order to rest your neck muscles.
- When sitting in the truck, rest your arm on the armrest and hand on the mini steering wheel with the knob in the palm of the hand. In this way you minimise the strain on your wrist.
- Stretch your fingers and back if you have had a long shift. For example, you can relieve your back by 'hanging' on the edge of a door.

EXERCISE 2

Mobility in the upper back

Stand with your feet wide apart and with your knees bent. Put your hands on your shoulders. Tighten your stomach and twist your torso to one side, then return to the neutral position before twisting in the other direction.

Don't forget to tighten your stomach when you twist. Your head should follow in the twisting movements.

↻ Repeat 10 times per side

1



EXERCISE 3

Strength and flexibility in the shoulders, back and legs

Lean your upper body forward, bend your front leg considerably, and just put the toes of your rear leg on the ground.

Keep your feet wide apart.

The weight should be on the front leg. Stretch out your arms, including fingers, in diagonally opposite directions. Do not arch your lower spine.

↻ Repeat 6 times per side



10–15 minutes



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EXERCISE 4

Strength and flexibility in the shoulders

The exercise is performed standing up. Stretch your arms out and up at the sides, but not higher than shoulder height.

Then, fold in your forearms behind your back so that you come as high behind your back as possible (see figure 2).

Then, return to the starting position and repeat the same movements by changing the arm down backwards and the arm up backwards behind your neck/back (see figure 3).

↻ Repeat about 6-7 times per arm



EXERCISE 5

Stretching the upper part of the neck

The exercise is performed standing up. Put your hands on the back of your head. Carefully press your head back against your hands. Keep your neck still by holding in your chin.

The stretching takes place by you holding in your chin. The head must absolutely not be bent forward. You can use your hands to help if you want, but be careful. Hold for about 8-10 seconds and relax between stretches.

↻ Repeat 2-3 times



10-15 minutes





 Counterbalance
forklift trucks

Full speed ahead



Counterbalance forklift trucks are workhorses when loading/unloading both outdoors and indoors. They are fast, durable and efficient machines that quickly perform their tasks.

Many people believe that counterbalance forklift trucks are also the most ergonomic trucks, as operating a counterbalance forklift feels like driving any normal car. That is not quite the case.

Counterbalance forklift operators also suffer from repetitive strain injuries. Most commonly, they lean their body in a certain direction to be able to see better. This might be in order to reverse, or to look past the load, and that puts a lot of strain on the back.

However, there is help to alleviate the problem. The seat back on a counterbalance forklift should be low so it is easy for the operator to move and look to the rear and to the sides. Similarly, the seat should be tiltable to minimise operator movement.

Sadly all too common, repetitive strain injuries among operators of counterbalance forklift trucks are different forms of disc and musculoskeletal changes in the back, which are caused by the machines being driven too quickly on uneven surfaces. When the machine bounces up and down, the back takes a pounding, and there is only so much it can handle.

A simple way to reduce the risk of this type of repetitive strain injury is a full floating floor which, in addition to the suspension, absorbs a lot of bumps and vibration.

Another important thing to consider is where the controls are placed. Some counterbalance forklift trucks have the controls spread out, which results in the operator being forced to bend or twist a lot to access the correct control.

Remember:

- Sit with even weight on both buttocks.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

EXERCISE 1

Strengthening the front of the thigh, the lower

Bend your legs and put your hands on your shoulders. As you stand up, put your weight on one leg and use only your toes as support on the other leg. At the same time, stretch your arm diagonally to the front. If you are standing on your right leg, you stretch your left arm at an angle to the right.

Go back to the starting position and then stretch in the other direction.

Note: Your upper body should be turned, do not stretch your arm so far away that you tilt forward.

↻ Repeat 8 times per side



EXERCISE 2

Flexibility in the upper back and shoulders

Curl forward with knees bent. Put your hands on your back and hold your chin in against your body. Then stretch out your body and both arms, one up and slightly back, the other down and slightly back. Squeeze your buttocks together so you don't arch your back or lean it backwards.

When you stretch up your right arm, your weight should be on your right leg, and vice versa. Then return to curl forward again.

This exercise should be done slowly.

↻ Repeat 8 times per side



spine and shoulders



10–15 minutes

EXERCISE 3

Stretching muscles of the shoulder blade

The exercise should be performed standing up. Bend your head forward at an angle towards the opposite knee. If you are twisting to the right you stretch out your left arm slightly behind you and angle your wrist upwards. Maintain the stretch for about 15 seconds.

Return slowly to the starting position and do the exercise on your left side with the right arm back.

↻ Repeat about
3 times per side



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If you have repetitive strain injury – contact a licensed physiotherapist and ask if the exercises are tailored for your problem.



Stand-in stackers

King of small spaces



The stand-in stacker demands very narrow space, is efficient and is used for a variety of handling tasks. This type of forklift usually gives the absolutely lowest pallet cost in a standard warehouse, and is therefore one of the most common types of truck in warehouses around the world.

The stand-in stacker is also a good choice from an ergonomic point of view. The truck design makes it easy for the operator to move. With this type of truck it is also easy to keep your body facing in the direction of travel. The stand-in stacker is the truck design which offers the most active driving.

Of course, not everything about a stand-in stacker is sweetness and light. There are a few things to consider. The controls should be adjustable to fit the operator. This applies to all the controls on the truck.

The controls should also be logically placed to avoid the operator needing to look down at them.

Operator space is of the utmost importance for creating an ergonomic driver environment on a stand-in stacker. It should be designed in accordance with how the operator moves, provide appropriate support and have a cushioned floor.

Remember:

- Stand with the same weight on both feet when driving. This distributes the weight on the discs in the lower spine in a better way.
- Try not to lean back against the truck when you drive. Such a working position increases the risk of the load on the discs being distributed wrongly and can lead to injury.
- Have as straight a posture as possible in your neck and back, both when driving and not driving the truck. You will then avoid extreme twisting and backward bending of your neck. Otherwise there is a risk that ligaments and other structures will be stretched.
- Do not stand too long in the truck without a break.

EXERCISE 1

Flexibility in the upper back

Put your hands on your shoulders with elbows bent, see figure 1. Bring your elbows together and then take them back to the starting position. Keep your back straight.

↻ Repeat 10 times



EXERCISE 3

Strengthening the shoulder blades and the back of the upper arm

For starting position (see figure 1). Then lower your body as far as you can so you can still lift yourself back.

Note: This movement can be very stressful on the shoulders. Be careful and do not go too far down in your movement if you do not want to put stress on the shoulder joint.

↻ Repeat about 5-6 times



EXERCISE 2

Strengthening the front of the thigh, the lower spine and shoulders

Bend your legs. As you stand up, put your weight on one leg and use only your toes as support on the other leg. At the same time, stretch your arm diagonally to the front. If you are standing on your right leg, you stretch your left arm at an angle to the right.

Go back to the starting position and then stretch in the other direction.

Note: Your back should be turned, do not stretch your arm so far away that you tilt forward.

↻ Repeat 8 times per side



10–15 minutes

EXERCISE 4

Strengthening the shoulders, back and hips with simultaneous balance training

Standing on your right leg, bend your left knee 90 degrees backwards without touching your right leg. Keep your back straight and then lift your right arm outwards and upwards, not over shoulder height. Maintain the position for about 5 seconds.

Switch leg and arm.

↻ Repeat about 6 times per side



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If you have repetitive strain injury – contact a licensed physiotherapist and ask if the exercises are tailored for your problem.



📍 Pedestrian controlled trucks with foldable platform

Effective and dangerous



Used in the right way, pedestrian controlled trucks, with or without foldable platform, are highly effective in most types of warehouse and handling tasks. Whether it concerns loading/unloading or stacking, it is one of the workhorses of the forklift world, and gets to perform most work tasks.

Pedestrian controlled trucks are over-represented in various kinds of pinning and crushing accidents, especially crush injuries to feet.

The easiest way to reduce the risk of accidents is to equip the trucks with a ride-on platform and protection bars. It is also necessary to introduce fixed procedures for the handling of goods by pedestrian controlled trucks, such as keeping truck traffic separate from foot traffic.

Another very important but sadly overlooked place is the loading bay. It is not at all unusual for trucks to drive onto loading ramps that are not secured and go plummeting to the tarmac 1.5 metres below.

Steering is an aspect that is easily forgotten, but steering is an important ergonomic factor on a pedestrian controlled truck. A truck equipped with modern, progressive power steering will, of course, reduce the load on the operator's shoulders and wrists – thus reducing the risk of repetitive strain injuries.

Remember:

- Your shoulders are subjected to much greater strain than normal if your elbows are angled more than 15 degrees away from your body. It is therefore important to try to keep your shoulders lowered and elbows close to the body while driving the truck.
- When using the cruise control or direction control buttons, push them smoothly with a slightly curved thumb.
- Transfer your weight between your legs when turning the truck.



10–15 minutes

EXERCISE 1

Mobility of the neck and shoulders

Make a circular motion backwards with your arms. Keep one arm in front of you and the other behind. Your elbows should be slightly bent.

↻ Repeat 8 times per side



EXERCISE 2

Strengthening the neck, shoulders and upper back

Stand with your feet about 50 cm away from a wall. Use your hands for support at shoulder height. Lean forward with a straight back and hold in your chin while slightly twisting your upper body backwards and upwards.

Turn your head in the same direction as you twist your upper body. Your arm, which is slightly bent, should follow in the twisting movement.



↻ Repeat about 6 times per side

EXERCISE 3

Stretching the shoulders and shoulder blades

Stand with the upper part of your back bent slightly forward. Hold one arm in front of you with a straight elbow and your thumb pointing downwards. Hold the other hand on top of the wrist and pull the arm forward at an angle. Maintain the position for about 15 seconds.

Alternate between right and left sides.

↻ Repeat about 3-4 times per arm



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Further health material Get your training poster



U C health & safety DAILY DRIVER CARE

For operators of counterbalance forklift trucks



Remember:

- Sit with even weight on both buttocks.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

EXERCISE 1
Strengthening the front of the thigh, the lower spine and shoulders

Bend your legs. As you stand up, put your weight on one leg and use only your foot as support on the other leg. At the same time, stretch your arm diagonally to the front. If you are standing on your right leg, you stretch your left arm at an angle to the right.

Go back to the starting position and then stretch in the other direction.

Note: Your upper body should be turned, do not stretch your arm so far away that you tilt forward.

➔ Repeat 8 times per side

EXERCISE 2
Flexibility in the upper back and shoulders

Cut forward with knees bent. Put your hands on your back and hold your chin in against your body. Then stretch out your body and both arms, one up and slightly back, the other down and slightly back. Squeeze your buttocks together so you don't arch your back or lean it backwards.

When you stretch up your right arm, your weight should be on your right leg, and vice versa. Then return to cut forward again.

This exercise should be done slowly.

➔ Repeat 8 times per side

EXERCISE 3
Stretching muscles of the shoulder blade

The exercise should be performed standing up. Bend your head forward at an angle towards the opposite knee. If you are twisting to the right you stretch out your left arm slightly behind you and angle your wrist upwards. Maintain the stretch for about 15 seconds.

Return slowly to the starting position and do the exercise on your left side with the right arm back.

➔ Repeat about 3 times per side

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UNI CARRIERS DAILY DRIVER CARE

For operators of stand-in stackers

Remember:

- Stand with the same weight on both feet when driving.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

Flexibility in the upper back

Strengthening the shoulder blades and the back of the upper arm

Strengthening the front of the thigh, the lower spine and shoulders

Strengthening the shoulders, back and legs with simultaneous balance training

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For operators of sideways-seated trucks

Remember:

- Sit forward on the seat so you have the chance to sit upright and stretch in order to rest your neck muscles.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

Mobility in the upper back

Strength and flexibility in the shoulders

Strength and flexibility in the shoulders, back and legs

Stretching the upper part of the neck

UNI CARRIERS

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For operators of order pickers

Remember:

- Stand with the same weight on both feet when driving.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

Mobility of the neck and shoulders

Stretching the spine

Strengthening the shoulder blades and upper back

Stretching the neck's side muscles

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For operators of pedestrian-controlled trucks with foldable platform

Remember:

- Sit forward on the seat so you have the chance to sit upright and stretch in order to rest your neck muscles.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.
- Do not sit leaning on one side for long periods or repeatedly during the same loading or unloading operation.

Mobility of the neck and shoulders

Strengthening the neck, shoulders and upper back

Stretching the shoulders and shoulder blades

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UNICARRIERS 360°

A complete solution for your business, covering service, fleet information, health & safety, training, tools, equipment and financing.

To maximise your operation.

U C *equipment*

U C *service*

U C *financing*

U C *health & safety*

U C *fleet information*

U C *tools*

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