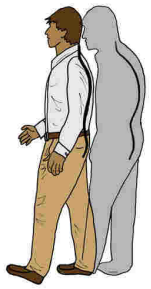
Back Injury Prevention

How you use your back is important in preventing back injury.

HEALTHY BACK IDEAS

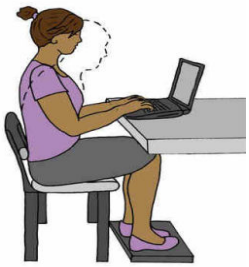


- Keep your back aligned and maintain good posture.
- Sleep on a firm mattress. Two positions of sleep keep your back aligned properly:
  - Sleep on your side with your knees slightly bent.
  - Sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees.
- Avoid sitting in 1 position for a long time. Get up and move around every hour.
- Use massage, if you feel tense in your shoulders, neck or back.
- Stretch before you work or exercise.

LIFTING

- Avoid lifting heavy objects. Make several small trips rather than carrying 1 heavy load.
- Do not let your back serve as a lever to lift objects.
- Lift objects close to your body to prevent leaning forward.
- Bend at your knees when you pick things up. **Do not** bend at your waist.
- Try not to lift heavy things above your waist.
- Try not to reach for things above your head in a manner that might disturb your back alignment.
- **Do not** turn or twist while holding an object. Turn your feet, not your back.
- Avoid sudden movements.
- Get help to move an object when needed.
- Use carts or dollies to move heavier objects whenever possible.

WORKING AT A DESK



- Use a chair with good lower back support.
- Sit close to your work so you do not need to lean over.
- Keep your chin tucked in to keep your back aligned.

IN A CAR

- Avoid prolonged drives without adequate breaks.
- Sit comfortably with your arms slightly flexed.

EXERCISE

Strengthening exercises decrease the risk of back injuries. Be sure to stretch before and after exercise. Ask your doctor for a list of exercises to strengthen your back and belly (*abdomen*). Stay at your ideal body weight.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.

- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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