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TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR BACK HEALTHY

ER24 BACK CARE AWARENESS WEEK 4 – 10 SEPTEMBER 2017

THE CORRECT WAYS TO MOVE CAN HELP TO PROTECT YOUR BACK. IF YOUR BACK HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY HURT, THE RISK OF FURTHER INJURY IS HIGH, AND IF IT IS SERIOUS ENOUGH, YOU MAY STRUGGLE WITH LIFELONG PAIN AND DISCOMFORT.

Prevention

The best way to prevent lower back pain is to ensure that the muscles surrounding your spine are kept strong. The best exercise is swimming, cycling and walking, and do not need to be performed in a gym. These exercises may also assist in preventing the return of pain in your lower back if you have already injured it.



Tips for standing for a prolonged period of time

- Wear comfortable shoes and stand on a soft surface.
- Bring your work to a comfortable level; do not bend over it.
- Rest one leg on a stool to reduce stress on your back.
- Change your position often.

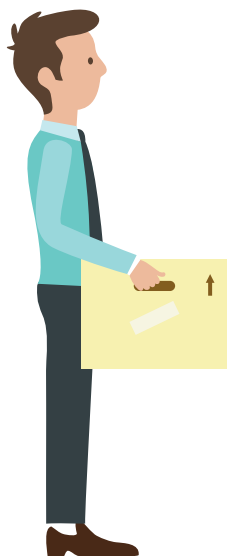
Tips for when you sit in a chair for extended periods of time

- Sit in a chair that supports your lower back. If the chair does not offer enough support, use a lumbar cushion behind your lower back.
- Position your chair so that your knees are at least as high as your hips when your feet are flat on the floor.
- Your desktop should be slightly above your waist.
- Sit close to your work; do not lean over it.
- Do not slump over while sitting.
- Take frequent breaks to stand up and stretch.



Body mechanics

Here are pointers from the Nicholas Institute of Sports Medicine and Athletic Trauma (Nismat) in New York, on how to lift, sit and stand properly:



Lifting

- Stand close to the object with your feet spread apart, about the width of your shoulders.
- Squat, bending your knees and hips, while keeping your back in proper alignment.
- Contract your stomach muscles.
- Lift with your leg muscles, not your back. Take care not to lift and twist at the same time.
- If you are lifting the object with another person, do it in unison. One person should say when to lift, walk, and unload.

Sitting and standing

Although people can make accommodations for their specific back problem, there are also general rules for proper sitting, standing, and lifting to protect your back.

Push, don't pull

Whenever possible, people should push objects rather than pull, according to Nismat.

If you need to move a piece of furniture, stand close to it, tighten your stomach muscles, and push with both arms. Don't lean forward and never push or pull with a bent back.

References

WebMD Feature, reviewed by Louise Chang, MD, on 2 June 2011, World Health Organization.