

Posture: "Good Posture"

Posture is the position in which you hold your body and limbs when standing, sitting or lying down. (Posture is how you hold your body). To have good posture means that you need to be aware of always holding yourself in a way that puts the least strain on your back, whatever you are doing.

Many people spend the majority of their day sitting down as they tend to sit when commuting, working in an office or studying, and relaxing at home. Prolonged sitting can cause a range of adverse health effects, including bad posture and back health. Good posture means that the key parts of a person's body are correctly aligned and supported by the right amount of muscle tension.

There are two types:

- **Dynamic posture** is how you hold yourself when you are moving, like when you are walking, running, or bending over to pick up something.
- **Static posture** is how you hold yourself when you are not moving, like when you are sitting, standing, or sleeping.

It is important to make sure that you have good dynamic and static posture.

The key to good posture is the position of your spine. Your spine has three natural curves - at your neck, mid back, and low back. Correct posture should maintain these curves, but not increase them. Your head should be above your shoulders, and the top of your shoulder should be over the hips.

How can posture affect my health?

Poor posture can be bad for your health. Slouching or slumping over can

- Misalign your musculoskeletal system
- Wear away at your spine, making it more fragile and prone to injury
- Cause neck, shoulder, and back pain
- Decrease your flexibility
- Affect how well your joints move
- Affect your balance and increase your risk of falling
- Make it harder to digest your food
- Make it harder to breathe

How can I improve my posture in general?

- Be mindful of your posture during everyday activities, like watching television, washing dishes, or walking
- Stay active. Any kind of exercise may help improve your posture, but certain types of exercises can be especially helpful. They include yoga, tai chi, and other classes that focus on body awareness. It is also a good idea to do exercises that strengthen your core (muscles around your back, abdomen, and pelvis).
- Maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight can weaken your abdominal muscles, cause problems for your pelvis and spine, and contribute to low back pain. All of these can hurt your posture.
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes. High heels, for example, can throw off your balance and force you to walk differently. This puts more stress on your muscles and harms your posture.

- Make sure work surfaces are at a comfortable height for you, whether you're sitting in front of a computer, making dinner, or eating a meal.

Correct posture can help by:

- reducing strain on the body during movement and exercise
- reducing wear and tear on the joints, muscles, and ligaments
- maintaining balance while moving and exercising
- reducing the risk of muscle strain and overuse conditions
- improving spine health

Posture while seated

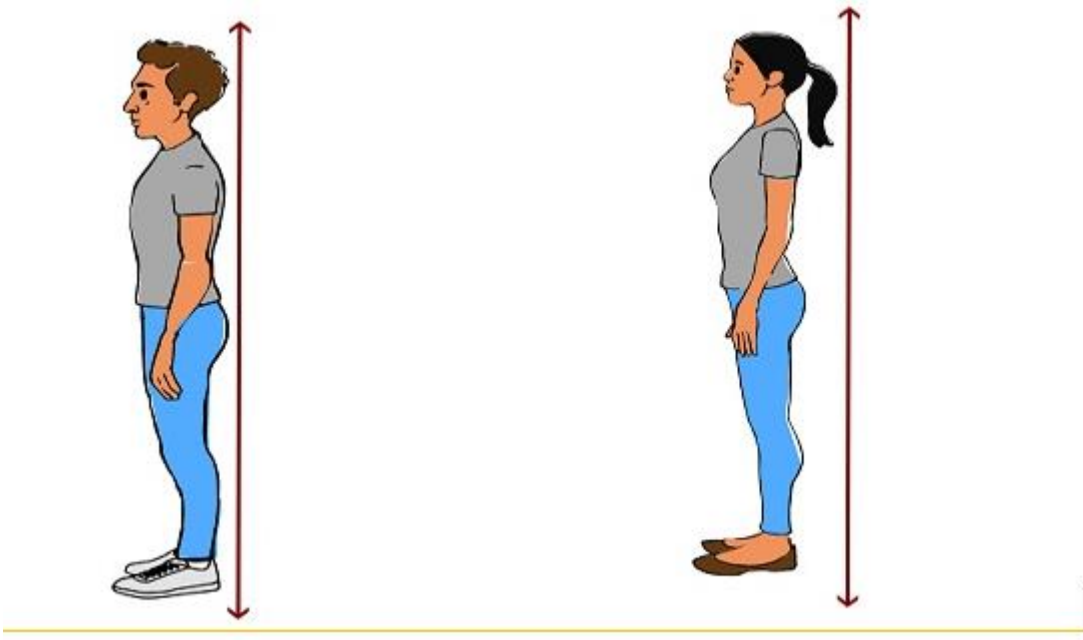
Many people spend a lot of their time sitting - either at work, at school, or at home. It is important to sit properly, and to take frequent breaks:

- **Switch sitting positions** often
- **Take brief walks** around your office or home
- **Gently stretch your muscles** every so often to help relieve muscle tension
- **Don't cross your legs**; keep your feet on the floor, with your ankles in front of your knees
- **Make sure that your feet touch the floor**, or if that's not possible, use a footrest
- **Relax your shoulders**; they should not be rounded or pulled backwards
- **Keep your elbows in close to your body**. They should be bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
- **Make sure that your back is fully supported**. Use a back pillow or other back support if your chair does not have a backrest that can support your lower back's curve.
- **Make sure that your thighs and hips are supported**. You should have a well-padded seat, and your thighs and hips should be parallel to the floor.



Posture when standing

- Stand up straight and tall
- Keep your shoulders back
- Pull your stomach in
- Put your weight mostly on the balls of your feet
- Keep your head level
- Let your arms hang down naturally at your sides
- Keep your feet about shoulder-width apart



Posture while walking

Walking is an activity that involves your entire body. To fully understand how to walk correctly, it helps to focus on each part of the body, from head to toe.

1. Keep your head up, when you're walking, focus on standing tall with your chin parallel to the ground and your ears aligned above your shoulders. Imagine your head being pulled up gently by an invisible piece of string that's attached to the ceiling. This may help prevent you from dropping your head into your chest while you walk. Keep your eyes and gaze forward. Focus on an area about 10 to 20 feet ahead of you while you walk.

2. Lengthen your back; Focus on elongating your spine while you walk. Try to avoid slouching, hunching, or leaning forward, which can put stress on your back muscles.

3. Keep your shoulders down and back, your shoulders also play a key role in your walking posture and technique. If your shoulders are tense or hunched forward, it can strain the muscles and joints in your shoulders, neck and upper back.

To ensure that your shoulders are correctly aligned while you're walking, do the following:

- Bring your shoulders up high in a shrug-like motion, then let them fall and relax. Using shoulder shrugs helps relieve tightness or tension, and puts your shoulders in a natural position that allows you to move your arms easily.
- Try to keep your shoulders loose and relaxed, not tensed up toward your ears or slouched forward. You can do shoulder shrugs occasionally while you're walking to ensure that you're keeping your shoulders relaxed and in the right position.

4. Engage your core, your core muscles also play an important role when you're walking, and help you move more easily. As you take each step, focus on tightening and engaging your core muscles by pulling your belly button in toward your spine. This can help you maintain balance and stability. It can also relieve stress and pressure on your back as you walk.

5. Swing your arms, as you walk, gently swing your arms back and forth at your sides. Make sure you swing your arms from your shoulders, not from your elbows.

- Don't swing your arms across your body.
- Don't swing your arms up too high. Keep them around your midsection, not around your chest.

6. Step from heel to toe, Maintain a steady heel-to-toe gait. This involves striking the ground with your heel first, then rolling through your heel to your toe, and pushing out of the step with your toe. Avoid flat-footed steps or striking the ground with your toes first.

Posture (Bending and Turning)



- Keep your feet flat and about shoulder-width apart from one another.
- Let both upper arms touch your ribs on the sides, unless you're using one hand for support.
- As you bend, keep your back upright and straight and your shoulder blades pinched together.
- Bend only at the knees and hips. Do not bend over at the waist since this will put your upper back into a rounded position which can cause broken bones in the spine.
- Even when standing to brush your teeth or to wash the dishes, try not to bend over at the waist. Instead, bend at the knees and hips while keeping your back straight.
- When changing the direction you're facing, move your feet with your body. Do not twist the spine. Pivot on your heels or toes with your knees slightly bent. Keep nose, knees, and toes pointing in the same direction.

Picking Up an Object from the Floor

A leading cause of back injury at work is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Learning and following the correct method for lifting and handling heavy loads can help prevent injury and avoid back pain.

Think before you lift, Plan the lift. Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Is there equipment you could use, such as a hoist that could help with the lift? Remove obstructions, such as discarded wrapping materials. For long lifts, such as from floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change your grip on it.

Keep the load close to the waist, Keep the load close to the waist for as long as possible while lifting to reduce the amount of pressure on the back. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If closely approaching the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before trying to lift it.

Adopt a stable position, your feet should be apart with 1 leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it's on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain a stable posture. Wearing over-tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, such as high heels or flip flops, may make this difficult.

Ensure a good hold on the load, Where possible, hug the load close to the body. This should help you make a stronger and more solid lift than gripping the load tightly with the hands only.

Do not bend your back when lifting, A slight bending of the back, hips and knees at the start of the lift is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees – in other words, fully squatting.

Do not bend the back any further while lifting, this can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

Do not twist when you lift, Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Keep your shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Look ahead,

Keep your head up when handling the load. Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Move smoothly, do not jerk or snatch the load as this can make it harder to keep control and increases the risk of injury.

Know your limits, do not lift or handle more than you can easily manage. There's a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If you're in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Lower down, then adjust, Put the load down and then adjust. If you need to position the load precisely, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

Safety FIRST USE PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUE

Before You Lift

PLAN AHEAD

- Know what you are lifting and how you will lift it.
- Be aware of the weight of the object.
- Determine whether or not it's safe to lift on your own.
- Make sure the work area is flat, dry and clear of debris.

CHECK YOUR PATHWAY

- Make sure the lift pathway is clear.
- Remove any tripping hazards or debris.
- Check for any wet or slick surfaces.

USE ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT

- Use lift assists, forklift, dolly, cart, hand truck or hoist.
- Make sure you are trained before using the equipment.

GET HELP WHEN NEEDED

- When lifting awkward or heavy loads, utilize a two person lift.
- Make sure you lift at the same time and keep the load level.

WEAR PROPER PPE

- Wear proper required protective shoes and gloves.

Lifting Do's and Don'ts

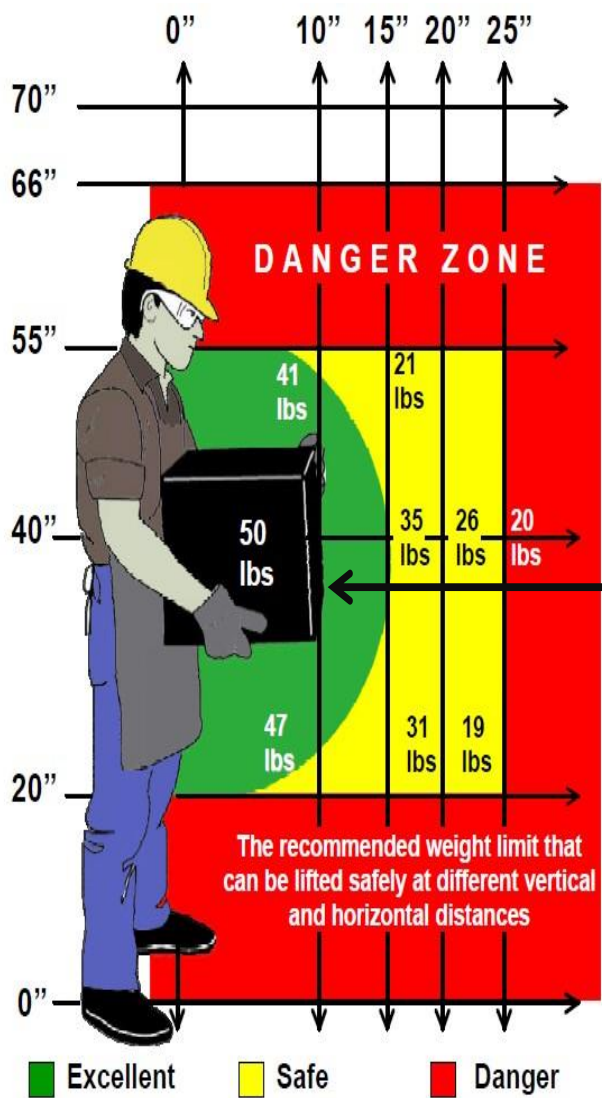
DO...

- Know or test the object weight.
- Use ergonomic lift assists when possible.
- Plan the lift and clear your path.
- Get help for heavy or awkward loads.
- Keep the object in the power zone.
- Use a wide stance for balance.
- Use your legs to lift.
- Pivot your feet to avoid twisting.

DON'T...

- Don't hold your breath.
- Don't bend or twist at the waist.
- Don't use a partial grip (1-2 fingers).
- Don't obstruct your vision when carrying.
- Don't jerk or lift quickly.
- Don't pinch your fingers or toes.
- Don't pull a load if you can push it.
- Don't forget to wear proper PPE

Proper Lifting Techniques



Basic Diagonal Lifting Technique

Manual Lifting and Material Handling

The amount of material handling in a task should be minimized by the way the job is engineered using ergonomic principles. However, lifting and moving of materials is still a big part of some jobs. Training on proper lifting procedures is a key way to prevent musculoskeletal injuries.

How you lift is important!

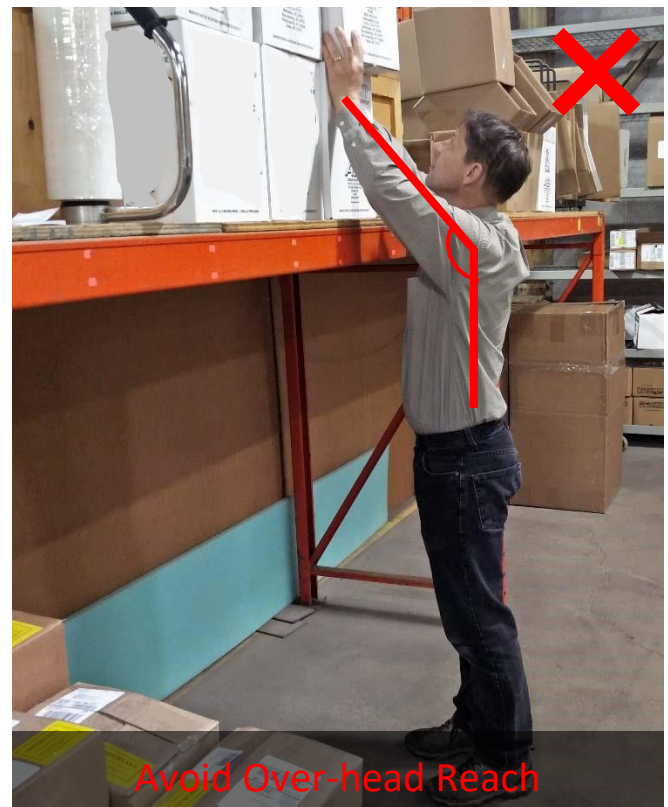
Proper lifting reduces risk factors, particularly by minimizing awkward postures which in turn reduces the amount of strain experienced by certain parts of the body. The body is capable of performing heavy tasks without injury, if it is in neutral posture, if forces are reasonable, and if appropriate rest periods are given to prevent fatigue.

*** Fatigue, inattention and rushing are common factors in the causes of MSDs.** Material Safety Data Sheet

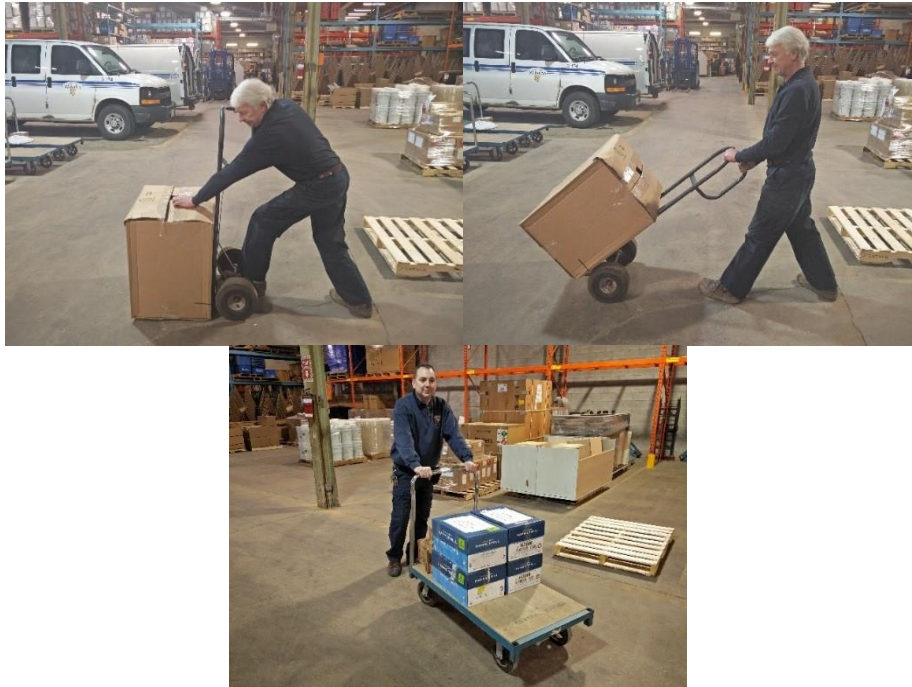
A Material Safety **Data Sheet (MSDS)** is a document that contains information on the potential hazards (health, fire, reactivity and environmental) and how to work safely with the chemical product. It is an essential starting point for the development of a complete health and safety program.

General material handling precautions:

- Inspect materials for surface hazards (slivers, jagged edges, slippery surfaces).
- Wipe off greasy or slippery surfaces before attempting to handle them.
- Grasp the object with a firm grip.
- Avoid gripping near catch or shear points.
- Keep hands away from the end of long objects (lumber, pipe) to prevent being pinched.
- Use gloves, safety shoes, eye protection, and other personal protective equipment when appropriate.
- Store frequently lifted objects between knuckle and chest height.
- Avoid lifting above shoulder height as much as possible.
- Push rather than pull.
- Use mechanical assistance if the load is above the head or below the feet (moving dolly, small step stool, portable carts, etc.)



- Ask for help if a load appears too heavy. Don't try to lift it.
- Use mechanical lifting aids when possible (fork lift, dolly, moving dolly, height adjustable tables, etc.)
- Take extra care with awkwardly shaped objects, liquids, and contents that may shift.



Lifting a load

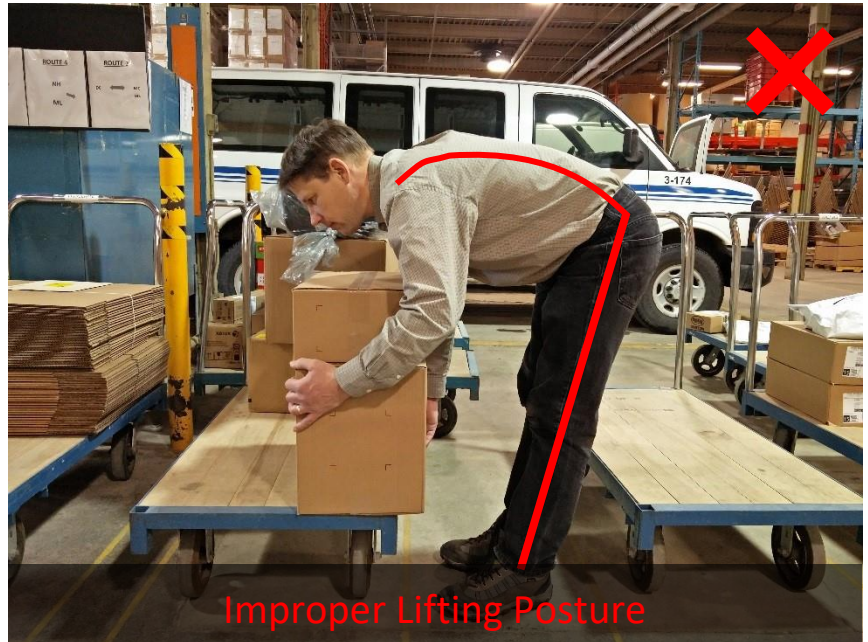
Two-handed lift

- **Position feet correctly:** Correct positioning of the feet provides an increase in balance. One foot should be placed alongside the object to be lifted, and one behind it. Feet should be shoulder width apart and stable. The rear foot will provide the upward power.
- **Straight back and bent knees:** A straight back is not necessarily a vertical back. The spine should be in its natural curvature, about a 15 degree angle from the hips. Knees should be unlocked and bent. Straightening the knees will give rise to the lift.
- **Load close to the body:** the



closer the center of gravity of the load is to the body the smaller the force on the lower back and arms will be. Keep elbows close to the body.

- **Correct grasp:** A full palm grip will reduce muscle stress and decrease the possibility of the load slipping. Gripping with the ends of the fingers increases the risk of muscle strain and slipping.
- **Chin in:** Tucking the chin in and raising the top of the head straightens the entire spine and provides the arms with a more efficient position for grasping.



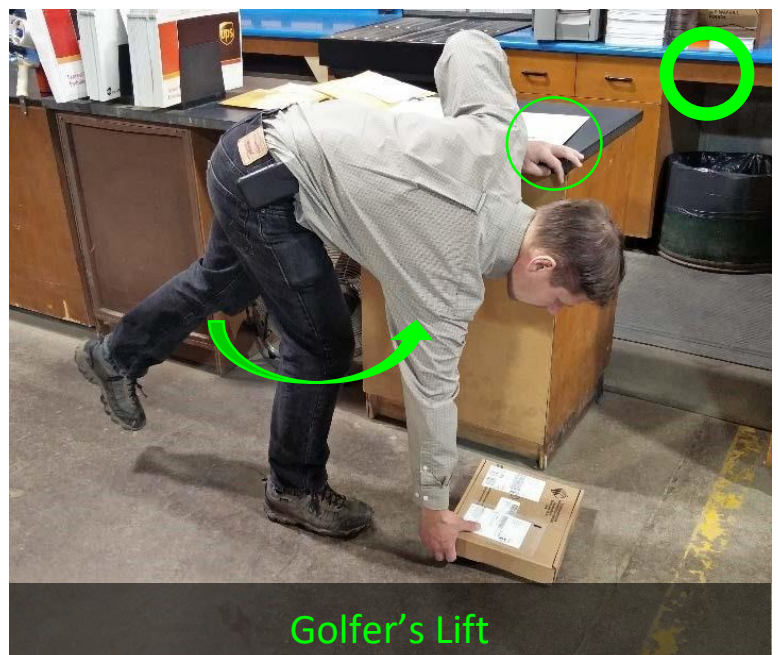
- **Body weight:** Centre body weight over the feet. This position increases balance and provides a powerful line of thrust.

Assisted one handed lift (Golfer's lift)

This technique can be used when the worker is lifting something out of a container or off the floor.

- One hand should be placed on a stable surface, while the person leans to grip the object.
- Extend out the **opposite leg and arm** to create a counter-balance.
- Push off with the non-lifting hand to raise the upper body, while bringing down the raised leg. Make sure the back muscles are not doing the work

The assisted one-hand lift should be used **ONLY** if the object to be lifted is not too heavy or awkward to be lifted by one hand or there is no stable surface for support.



As you lift, remember to:

- **Tighten your stomach muscles** as the lift begins. Start a lift by pushing through the rear foot and continue it with the straightening of the knees.
- **Use leg muscles** to lift, the back should remain straight.
- Lifting should be a smooth motion, **do not jerk-lift** as it increases the stress on the lower back.
- **Never twist your body while lifting,** instead pivot with your feet.
- Keep your head up and **keep the natural curve in your back.**
- When transferring loads laterally, shift your weight from one leg to another, keeping the curve in your lower back and elbows close to the body.

Carrying a load

- Get help if the object is too bulky or heavy to be handled by one person.
- Inspect the route over which the load is to be carried. Plan a spot to set the load down and rest.
- To change directions; lift the object to the carrying position and turn the entire body, including the feet. Avoid twisting the body especially the back.
- Carry the load close to the body, preferably resting against the trunk.
- Carry the load at its balance point.
- To set down a load; set the edge of the load on a bench, table etc. Adjust hand position and push the object until it is secure.

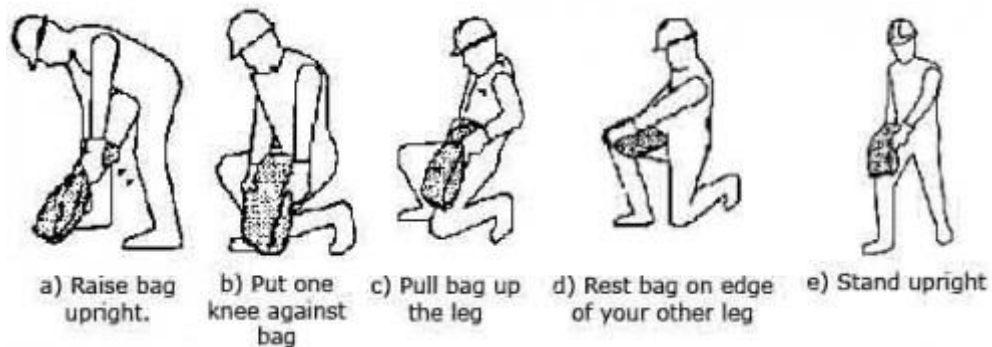


Team Lifting

When lifting is done by two or more people the load should be adjusted so it rides at the same level and the load is distributed evenly. Team lifting and carrying should be synchronized, a team leader can help by calling out commands ("lift", "walk", etc).

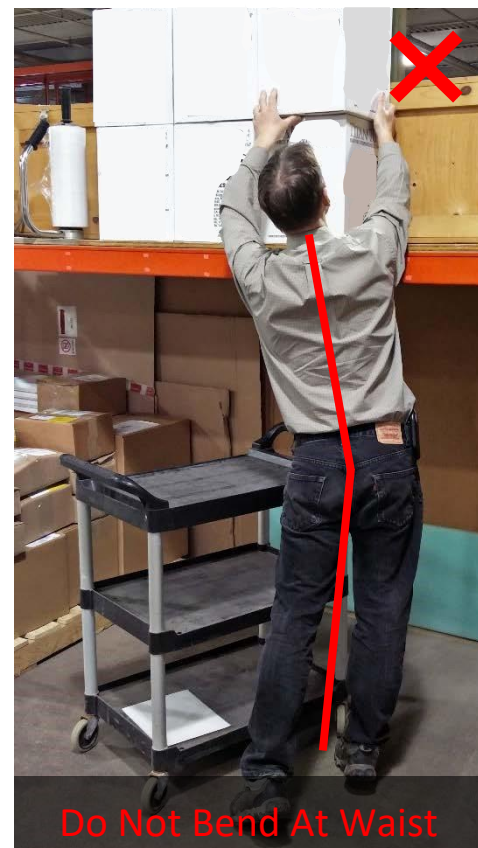
Special Precautions

- Check the weight of barrels and drums as it may change or shift constantly
- Take extra care with sheet metal and glass, as it can be sharp
- If the load contains hazardous material, take protective measures accordingly
- Beware of 'floppy' loads like sacs or bags



Other ergonomic tips

- Avoid severe bending
- Keep your work in front of your body
- Avoid bending your torso backward
- Avoid twisting the torso and long reaches
- Hold hands in front of, and near to the body



Exercises

Here are some tension-relieving exercises that you can do throughout the day. You don't need to do all of them at once, but it would be beneficial to do them at the beginning of each day, and during each 15-minute break. Think of work as a sport, and that you are stretching out before the game.

First, a good exercise would be to stretch muscles that are opposing the ones you normally use. This will allow you to achieve a balance within muscle groups. For example, if you regularly use your biceps muscle, along with stretching it, you can also stretch your triceps muscle.

Here are some other exercises:

- Clench your hand into a fist and release, fanning out the fingers. Repeat 3 times.
- With elbows straight, bend your wrists down as far as they will go, hold for 3 seconds then extend your wrists back as far as they will go. Do 5 times.
- Stand up straight, place your hands on your hips and bend backwards at the waist, gently. Do 5 times.
- Touch the fingertips of your hands together just behind the top of your head without letting your hands touch your head, move your elbows in a backward direction, hold 5 seconds then relax. Do 3 times.
- Tuck your chin in while keeping your eyes level; hold 3 seconds and then relax. Do 5 times.
- Roll your head in circles, stretching more toward each shoulder. Do 5 times.
- Eyestrain tip: Blink often, and take frequent rest pauses; close your eyes for a minute, refocus by looking away from your monitor at something in the distance, and roll your eyes up and down, left to right.

Safety First – Work Smart

Always warm-up your back and legs before performing any lifting task! We are ALL athletes in life, so we need to warm-up our body to improve performance and to reduce risk of injury. It's important to prepare your body for work.



Low Back Rotation Stretch - Stand with hands on hips. Stabilizing the hips and legs, gently roll your upper body forward, right, backward, and left to stretch your lower back. Perform 5 slow circles gradually expanding the circle each time. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Hamstring & Achilles Stretch - Position your body with one leg forward and the toes of that foot raised up. Keep your back straight while you bend forward at the waist. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh and knee. Then shift your weight onto your forward leg and bend knee, keep the back leg straight and heel on floor. Hold each stretch for 20 seconds. Perform each stretch 2 times for each leg.



Back Pain

The most common cause of back pain is muscle spasms. An awkward movement of the back can lead to a severe muscle spasm. The muscle spasm causes the back to “cramp” and can cause severe pain.

A muscle spasm can occur after an awkward bending or twisting motion. It may even occur after a simple sneeze or cough. A movement as simple as bending to tie a shoe or twisting your back to face a different direction can cause a spasm. Muscle spasms can also occur when a heavy object is lifted incorrectly.

Long lasting back pain can occur also after accidents that have resulted in injury to the back.



Prevention

The best way to prevent back pain is to regularly exercise the back. It is recommended that you do back strengthening and stretching exercises at least 2 or 3 times per week.

Another good way of preventing back and leg pain is by using good back techniques at home and at work. Adopt a straight posture while sitting or standing.

You should try not to bend your back. Bend instead at the knees or at the hips while lifting objects, tying shoes, putting socks on or pants, etc.

Losing weight and avoiding accidents can also prevent back pain.

Benefits of Exercising

Exercising the back muscles for 15 minutes a day, 3 times a week has three main benefits:

- It strengthens the muscles of the back, neck, and shoulders. This makes back injuries less likely.
- It makes the back more flexible, increasing its range of motion and endurance.
- It relaxes the back and reduces pain.

Exercise Tips

Before you start a back exercise program, talk to your healthcare provider, especially if you have had a back accident or a history of back problems.

Stretch slowly, and avoid sudden movements. Pay attention to your muscles stretching. When you have stretched it as far as it can comfortably go, hold for 5 seconds, and then slowly return to the original position. Breathe slowly and deeply as you exercise.

Never stretch to the point where it is no longer comfortable. Go to the point where you feel a mild tension and relax as you hold the stretch. The feeling of tension should go away as you hold the position. If it does not, ease off slightly and find an amount of tension that is comfortable for you.

Do up to 5 repetitions for each exercise unless your healthcare provider has requested a different number of repetitions.



Expect some soreness when you first begin exercising. Start out with a 2-second hold and gradually increase the amount of time until you can comfortably hold your stretch for 5 seconds. Start out with two or three repetitions and gradually increase to more repetitions.

The following are the typical steps in a stretching exercise:

- Move slowly to the point where you feel a mild tension in the muscle.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Return slowly to the original position.
- Relax for 2 seconds.
- Repeat the above 3 to 5 times.

If you feel dizzy during an exercise, stop exercising and sit down if you are not already seated or laying down.

Exercise regularly. If your healthcare provider has asked that you do these exercises, follow his or her directions. These directions may include how long you should hold your stretched position, the number of repetitions, and the number of times your exercises are done daily or weekly.

The program described in the next section explains 12 back exercises. They include:

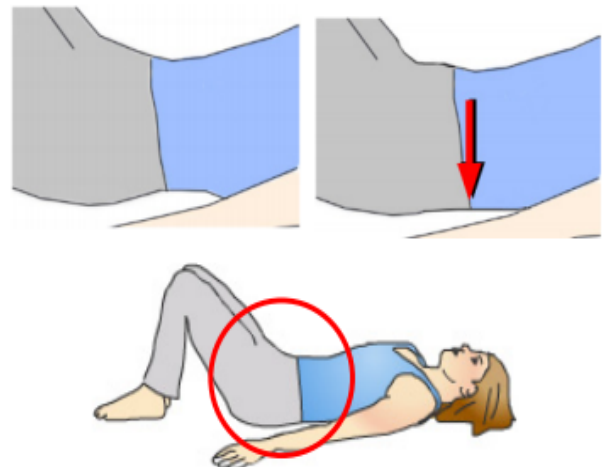
- Exercises to improve flexibility through stretching the muscles
- Exercises to improve strength through resistance

Stretching Exercises

The following are back exercises that improve flexibility through stretching the muscle:

The Pelvic Tilt stretches your abdominal and back muscles and increases the flexibility of your hips.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat on the floor or a mat, and your arms at your sides.



Your feet should be about hip-width apart. Your knees should be slightly closer together than your feet.

2. Flatten the end of your back against the floor. This will cause your hips to tilt forward.
3. Hold this position for a few seconds and then relax.
4. Do 5 repetitions.

The Single Leg Pull stretches the muscles of your hips, lower back and buttocks.

1. Lie on your back with one leg bent, one foot flat on the floor or a mat, and your other leg extended straight out.
2. Use the arm on the same side to pull the bent knee to your chest in a continuous motion while keeping your lower back and other knee pressed against the floor.
3. Hold this position for 5 seconds.
4. Lower your leg to the starting position and relax.
5. Do 5 repetitions with the same leg.
6. Repeat exercise for your other leg.



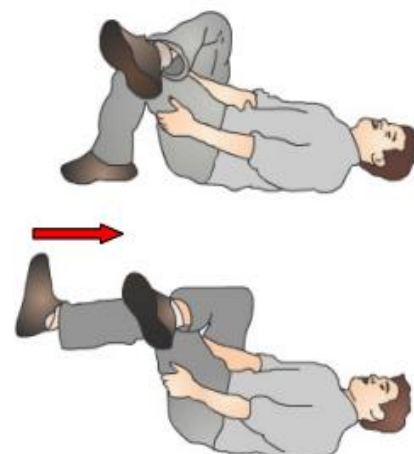
The Double Knee to Chest exercise stretches the muscles of your hip area, buttocks and lower back.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat on the floor or a mat, and arms at your sides.
2. Raise your knees, either one at a time or together, to your chest. You can use your arms to help pull your knees to this position. Use your arms to gently pull you knee(s) to your chest.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Lower your legs one at a time to the floor and rest briefly.
5. Do 5 repetitions.



The Pretzel is a great stretch for your inner legs and hips.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.
2. Cross one leg over the other at the knee.
3. Take a hold of your bent leg and pull both legs toward your chest.
4. Hold the stretch for 5 seconds.
5. Release and uncross your legs.
6. Repeat this stretch using your other leg.



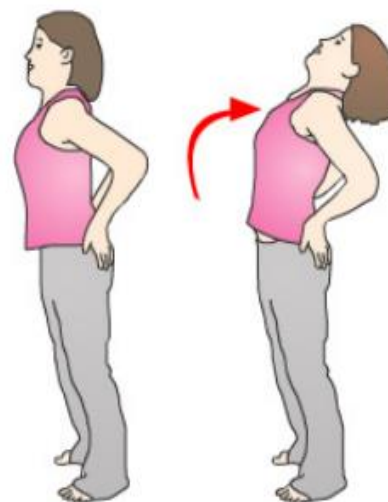
The Side Stretch stretches the muscles in your back and sides.

1. Stretch one arm over your head and bend your upper body to the opposite side in a flowing motion. Put your other hand on your waist and do not twist or jerk your body as you bend.
2. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. Return to the starting position with your hands and arms at your sides.
4. Do 5 repetitions.
5. Switch to the other side and repeat Steps 1 through 4.



The Back Arch stretches your shoulder, back, and hip muscles.

1. Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart and point directly forward. Place the palms of your hands on your lower back.
2. Gently breathe in and out until you feel relaxed.
3. Bend your upper body backwards, supporting your back with your hands and keeping your knees straight. Try exhaling as you lean back.
4. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Gradually return to your starting position.
6. Do 5 repetitions.



The Hamstring Stretch stretches the backs of your thighs.

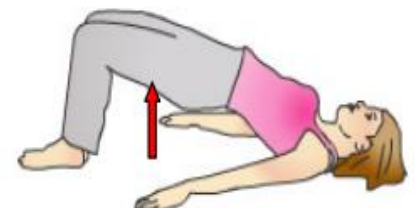
1. Lie on your back with one leg bent, one-foot flat on the floor, and your other leg extended straight out.
2. Lift your straight leg upward until you feel a slight stretch along the back of your leg. Use your hands to grasp behind your knee and help raise and hold your leg. If you have difficulty reaching your knee with your hands, place a towel under your knee or thigh and pull up on that.
3. Hold that position for 5 seconds.
4. Slowly lower your leg and let it relax on the floor.
5. Do 5 repetitions.
6. Switch legs and repeat.



Strengthening Exercises

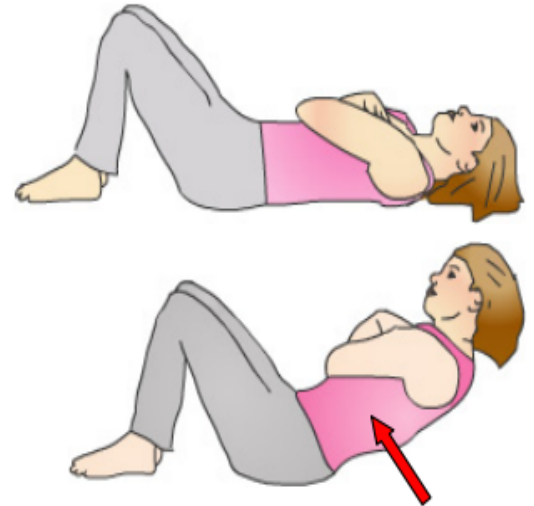
The Pelvic Lift strengthens the muscles of your buttocks.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat on the floor or a mat at about shoulder width, and arms at your sides.
2. Raise your hips bit by bit. It is important that you raise your hips without arching your back. Focusing on not sticking your stomach out can help you keep from arching your back. Try to keep a straight line from your shoulders to your knees.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Slowly lower your hips to the starting position.
5. Do 5 repetitions.



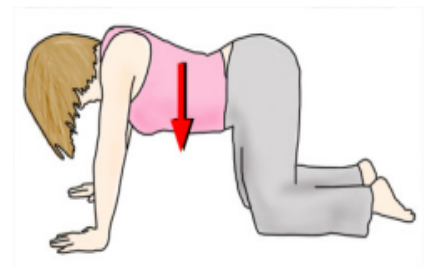
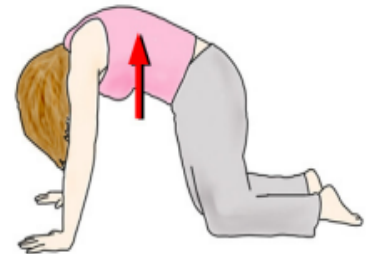
The Partial Sit-up or Crunch strengthens your abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat on the floor or a mat, and arms at your sides.
2. Cross your arms over your chest, keeping your middle and lower back flat on the floor. Raise your head and shoulders off the floor slightly. Raise up only far enough to get your shoulder blades just off the floor. It's okay if you can't go up too far at first.
3. Hold this position for just a few seconds. As you get stronger, you can hold it for 5 to 10 seconds.
4. Gradually return your upper body to a relaxed position on the floor.
5. Do 5 repetitions.



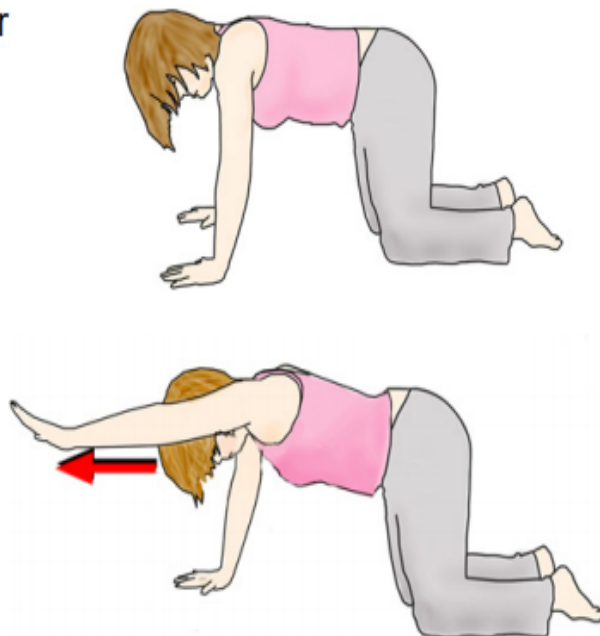
The Cat and Camel strengthens your back and abdominal muscles.

1. Start on your hands and knees with your weight evenly distributed and your neck parallel to the floor.
2. Arch your back upward by tightening your abdominal and buttock muscles, letting your head drop slightly.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Let your back sag gently toward the floor while keeping your arms straight. Keep your weight evenly distributed between your legs and arms.
5. Hold for 5 seconds.
6. Do 5 repetitions.



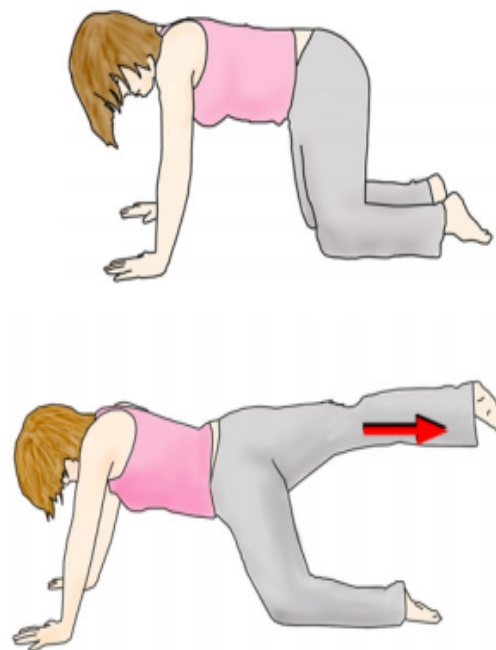
The Arm Reach strengthens the muscles of your shoulders and upper back.

1. Start on your hands and knees with your weight evenly distributed and your neck parallel to the floor.
2. Stretch one arm out in front of you being careful not to raise your head. Keep your weight evenly distributed between your knees and the one arm on the floor.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Return to the starting position.
5. Do 5 repetitions.
6. Switch to your other arm and repeat the exercise.



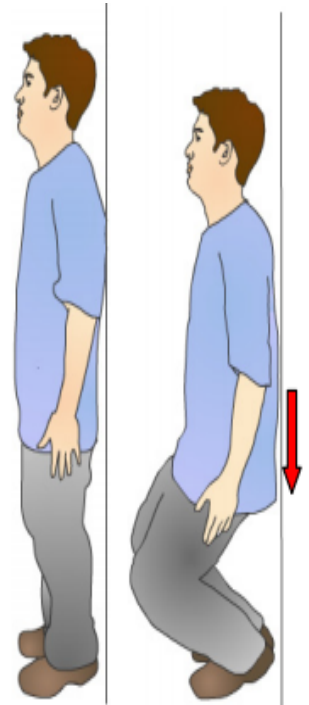
The Leg Reach strengthens the muscles of your buttocks.

1. Start on your hands and knees with your weight evenly distributed and your neck parallel to the floor.
2. Slowly extend one leg straight out behind you and hold it parallel to the floor. Your foot may be pointed or flexed – whichever is more comfortable for you. As you extend your leg, don't let your back, head or stomach sag. And make sure no one is behind you when you do this move.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Return to the starting position. Do 5 repetitions.
5. Switch legs and repeat the exercise.



The Wall Slide strengthens your back, hip and leg muscles.

1. Stand with your back against the wall and your feet shoulder-width apart. Place your hands on your hips or let your arms hang at your sides, whichever is more comfortable. Keep your head level by focusing directly in front of you.
2. Slide gracefully down the wall into a crouched position with your knees bent to about 90 degrees, as if you were sitting in a chair. If you have trouble going down this far, slide down halfway.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Slide smoothly up to your starting point.
5. Do 5 repetitions.



Your Exercise Routine

You should do your exercise routine as frequently as suggested by your healthcare provider. If you do not have back pain or have never had an injury and you are exercising to prevent future back pain, aim at 15 to 30 minutes a session, 2 to 3 times a week.

Start each session with stretching exercises. After you do your strengthening exercises, try to end the session with more stretching exercises. Do not rush or strain yourself as you exercise. Remember that as you begin to exercise, you will probably not be able to hold the stretch for a full five seconds and will do fewer repetitions. As you build your endurance, you can increase the amount of time you hold your stretches and the number of repetitions.

You can group the exercises. For example,

- Start with the exercises you do while lying down
- Continue with the exercises you do while you are on your hands and knees

- Finish with the exercises you do while you stand up



You should combine stretching and strengthening exercises with some type of aerobic exercises approved by your doctor. Examples of aerobic conditioning include walking, bicycling, or swimming. A good way to be sure that you get both is to alternate your back exercise program and aerobic conditioning every other day.

General aerobic conditioning is important not only for your back but it also improves muscle tone, relieves stress, and improves sleep habits, along with other benefits.

Conclusion

Back pain is the most common medical problem in the U.S. It is mostly caused by muscle spasms and degeneration of the disks in the spine. If not taken seriously, back pain can become very disabling.

Back pain will affect most people at some time in their lives. Action can be taken to prevent back pain or postpone the degeneration of the spine and disks. Preventive measures include:

- Exercises to strengthen the back and make it more flexible.
- Adopting good body postures and techniques.
- Avoiding accidents.
- Losing weight if you are overweight.

Guiding questions:

- Posture
 - Explain what is meant by the term "good posture."
 - Describe techniques for maintaining good posture during various activities.
- Safe Lifting
 - Describe the proper technique for lifting and moving an object.
 - Describe proper techniques for carrying a long load, stacking a load, and performing activities that involve twisting or turning.
- Back Exercises
 - Describe basic exercises that can be done in an office.
 - Describe basic exercises that can be done at home or at a gym.