

Fitness Focus-Lower Back Care (part 2)

Posture and Body Mechanics

The first lower back care lesson introduced some causes of lower back pain, a basic understanding of the spine and the notion that most of the problems can be prevented. This lesson will examine the things that contribute to the problem and offer suggestions on how to prevent it from happening in the first place or from reoccurring.

SITTING

Poor sitting posture alone can cause a problem. If you already have a problem, sitting incorrectly will only aggravate the problem.

When you have low back pain or simply want to avoid it:

1. Sit as little as possible. If you must sit, maintain the proper lordosis in the lower back. This can be accomplished by placing a lumbar roll (3-4" diameter towel or pad) in the small of the back.
2. Chairs should be firm with a straight back. You should be able to put your feet comfortably on the ground so your knees and hips are approximately at the same level. Avoid sitting on low, soft or overstuffed furniture.
3. When sitting down or standing from sitting, maintain the proper lordosis. Move to the edge of the seat and stand. Avoid bending at the waist.

DRIVING/RIDING IN A CAR

1. Place a lumbar roll behind the lower back to help maintain the proper lordosis.
2. During long trips, stop frequently and walk.
3. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT!

RESTING/SLEEPING

1. Sleep on a firm mattress.
2. If lying on your back:
 - Use lumbar roll
 - Place pillow under knees
3. If lying on your side:
 - Place pillow between knees
 - Use lumbar roll at waist to keep your spine in a neutral position
4. If you are moving from lying on your back to sitting:
 - Roll to your side
 - In one motion, swing your legs over the side and push with arms to a sitting position

STANDING

1. Avoiding standing in one position for long periods of time. Shift your weight frequently.
2. If turning from a standing position, move your feet first. Avoid twisting your upper body before moving your feet.
3. Do not stand with stiff knees, exaggerated lordosis or rounded shoulders with head forward.

TURN OVER

LIFTING

1. Keep your spine straight and do not bend forward.
2. Stand close to the load you are lifting with your feet comfortably apart.
3. Squat, allowing your knees to bend down to the load. Lift by straightening your legs.

WORKING AROUND THE HOUSE

1. If you are doing chores such as vacuuming, mopping, raking, mowing, always keep the device as directly in front of you as possible. **AVOID STRETCHING FORWARD** while doing these chores.
2. If making beds, cleaning tubs and toilets or other tasks at a low level, do so from a kneeling or squatting position. **DO NOT LEAN FORWARD.**
3. Gardening and yard work require long periods of bending forward. Interrupt these activities frequently.

DRESSING/BRUSHING TEETH

1. Always sit and try to maintain the proper lordosis when taking off or putting on pants, shoes or socks.
2. Avoid bending forward when brushing your teeth.

Lesson Review

1. If you are sitting, describe 3 things you should do if you have lower back pain or want to avoid it.
2. Describe 3 things you should do when driving in a car for long periods of time.
3. Describe the preventative medicine for a healthy standing posture.
4. Describe the proper lifting technique.
5. If you are doing chores around the house, getting dressed or brushing your teeth, what preventative medicine is suggested?