

SAY GOODBYE to NECK & BACK PAIN



A Back Care Guide

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Overview

** The most common problem after the common cold, cough and headache is backache.*

** 80% of people suffer some or the other form of spinal problems which result in neck or back pain at some point during their lives.*

** 90% people suffer from postural neck and back pain which occurs while bending down, lifting weight, or working in an inappropriate manner or posture.*

** Every episode of pain may force the sufferer to rest for 12-15 days.*

If a 25 year old person in an office job works 8-10 hours a day, he or she will experience neck pain and/or backache within two years. If care is not taken at this point of time, in a span of 10 years this person may experience serious and debilitating problems as a result of neck and back pain.



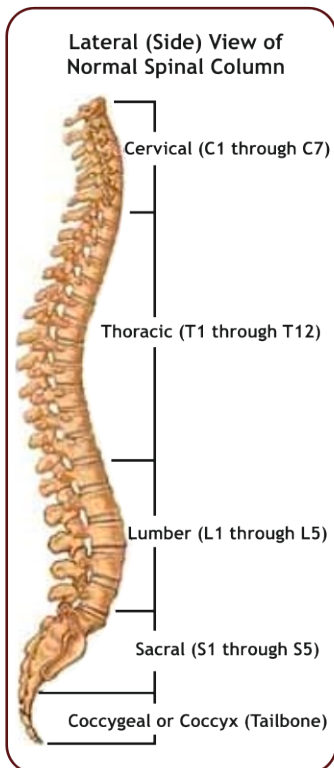
Spine Basics

** Spine has four main curves that help you keep your balance and stand straight.*

** The spine is composed of bony blocks called “vertebrae” that are stacked on top of one another and separated by shock-absorbing discs. The neck has seven vertebrae. The chest has twelve vertebrae, each carrying two ribs. There are five vertebrae in the low back or lumbar area. The remaining fused vertebrae create a solid base called the “sacrum” and the “coccyx” or tailbone.*

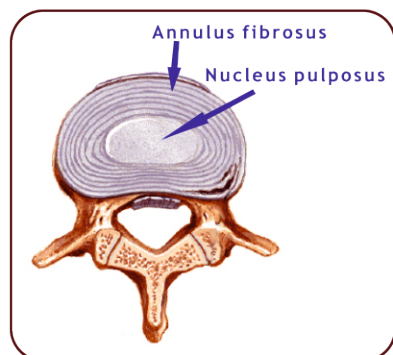
** Discs act as cushions between the vertebrae. They have a very strong, tough outer casing with a firm jelly-like substance inside. Discs are firmly attached to the vertebra above and below and can withstand considerable compression.*

** Muscles, tendons and ligaments support your back and help you move. Nerves carry messages between your brain and your muscle*



The main functions of the spine are to :-

- Support the trunk and the head
 - Allow flexibility of the body
 - Protect the spinal cord
-



A NORMAL DISC

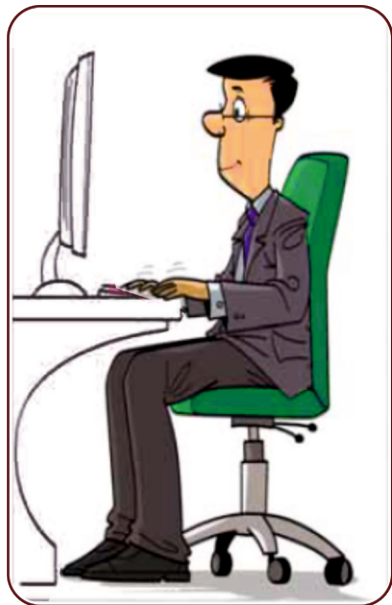
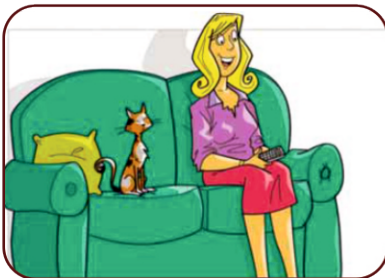
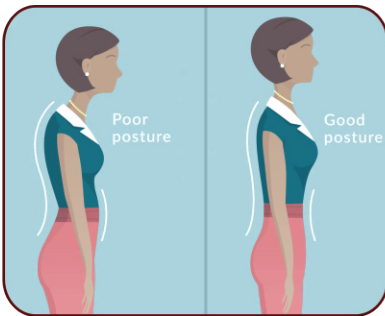
Maintain a good posture

** Poor posture can strain ligaments in your back.*

** Gravity is always trying to pull us down and this combined with bad habits can mean we stand and sit in ways that aren't good for our back.*

** When we hold awkward postures for hours at a time we put additional strain on the back muscles and stress on the spineless and stress on the spine.*

** Learning and practising good posture can help prevent back pain.*



Correct Sitting Posture

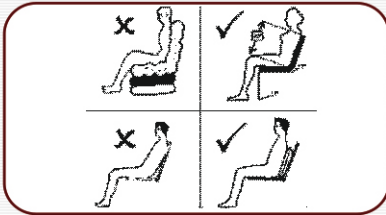
* Sit well back into the chair. It should support your lower back, Do not sit for long periods.

* Your feet should be flat on the floor. If your feet do not reach the floor, adjust the height of the chair or use a footrest.

* Not using proper chairs causes muscle-fatigue and back-pain.

A well designed chair

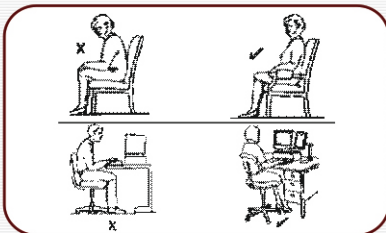
The correct seat back should have an angle of 105 degrees with the horizontal. It's length should be 17 inches.



Footrest

* While sitting in a chair the position of the knees should be a little higher than the level of your thighs.

* Footrest of appropriate height may be used to put the knees higher than the thighs.



Inclination Pads

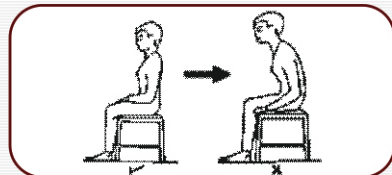
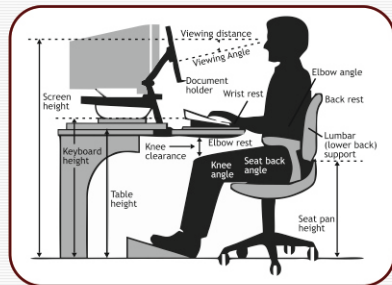
* Use tables or desks that are slightly higher than your waist level in the front, and at-waist-level on the sides to enable you to work with a straight neck.

* Those who work for longer hours on the computer must place the computer screen exactly at eye-level. The keyboard should be placed in such a way that forearms rest on the table. This eliminates arm muscle fatigue.

* While typing from a document, place the document upright on a special stand so that improper neck movements do not strain the neck

Arm rests

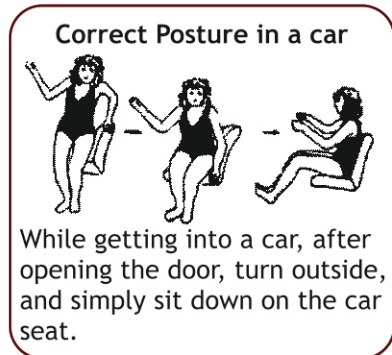
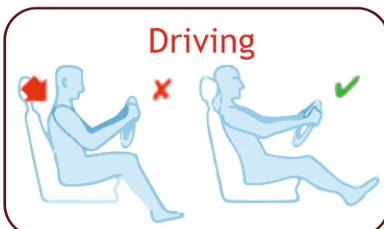
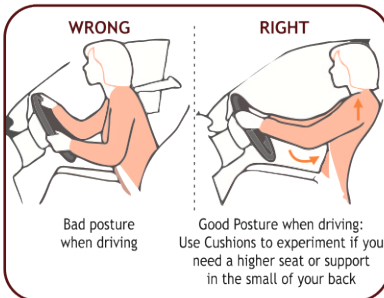
Use chairs with armrests on both sides and rest your arms on the arm rests while sitting.



Correct Posture in a car

** While getting into a car, after opening the door, turn outside, and simply sit down on the car seat. Then lift your feet one by one inside the car and turn your face to the front of the car.*

- *Sit a comfortable distance from the foot pedals and steering wheel*
- *Sit well back into the car seat. It should support your lower back*
- *If the back of the seat does not support you properly, use a small cushion or folded towel at the small of your back*
- *If you are driving a long distance, take regular breaks to walk and stretch.*



Try to take breaks at least **once an hour** on long trips

Correct Standing Posture

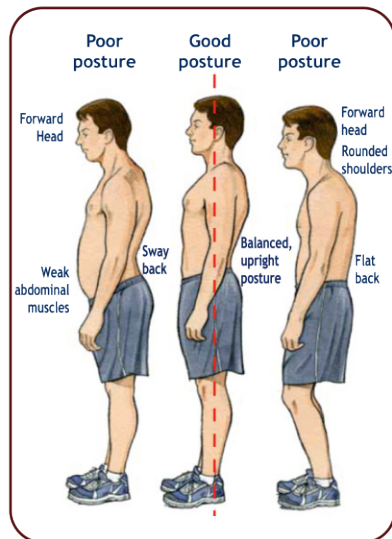
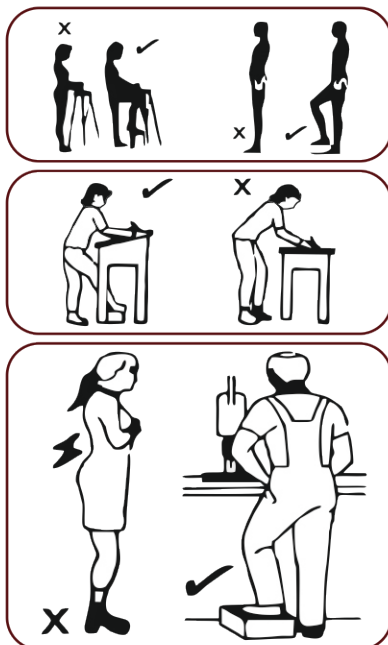
Backache can be prevented by placing a foot on a footrest. Put the other foot on the foot rest after some time. Repeat this at regular intervals. This relaxes the back-muscles.

How to stand for long hours

The ideal work tables for professionals should be at elbow level. For writing and drawing there should be a flat surface at 20 degree inclination with the horizontal so that the person can look down without bending his/her back.

Correct Footwear

Wearing high-heeled shoes places back-muscles under great strain and pressure, especial when standing for a long of time. Prefer using flat heeled shoes instead of high heels.



Rest one foot on a
1-2 inch high box
or inside a cabinet door

Correct Sleeping Postures

- * Use mattresses that are not too soft and not too hard.*
- * If your bed is too high, use foot-stools while getting in or out of your bed.*
- * Hammocks should not be used by backache patients because in hammocks or beds with loose strings or springs the spine is subjected to unequal pressure. This results in pain.*
- * Placing a soft pillow under the knees while sleeping on the back relaxes back-muscles and relieves backache.*
- * Do not sleep on the floor without a mattress if you are suffering from backache, Do not sleep on your stomach. Instead, sleep on your left side or your right side.*

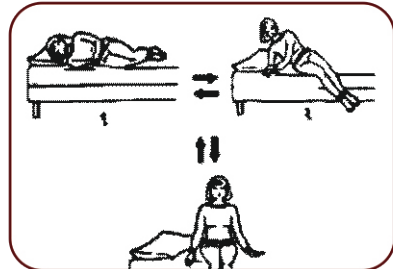
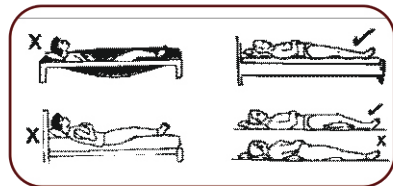
Going to bed and getting up

Raise yourself up on your left or right elbow on any side. Lower both your legs off the bed and onto the floor. Sit up on the bed and then proceed to stand up

Using the correct pillows

Stand against a flat wall. You need a pillow which fits exactly in the space between your neck and the wall. When you sleep, your neck needs support. So place your pillow under your head, below your neck and up to where your shoulder begins

The average person spends **1/3 of his life** Sleeping. Using a back-friendly position is very important for your health



Lifting Weights

Lift only what you are able to lift safely.

- * Get help if you need it.*
- * Use available equipment.*
- * Keep a firm grip on the load.*
- * When turning, move your feet instead of twisting your body.*
- * Do not bend down from your waist to pick up anything on the floor. Keep your back straight, bend your knees and squat down, so that your legs, not your back, do the work.*
- * When you lift weight, keep whatever you are lifting close to your body.*
- * While walking, distribute the weight evenly in both hands. For example: carry two buckets of water in both hands, instead of one heavy bucket in one hand.*



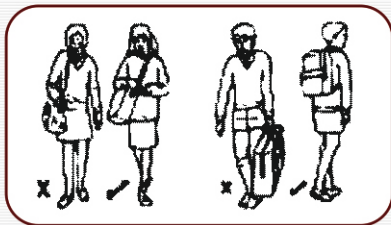
How to carry a heavy Bag

** Don't hang a heavy bag from the shoulder.*

** Sling it around the neck at a cross-angle.*

** This way the spine is able to remain in a balanced position.*

Ask for help with
heavy items or use carts or
hand trucks and
always push
instead of pull



Advice for school children

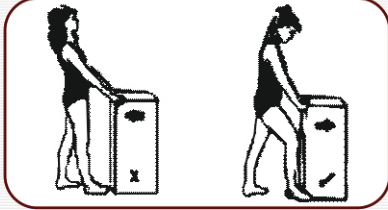
A back-pack with two shoulder straps, where the weight is evenly distributed on both sides, is the best way to keep the spine strain-free.

When you are packing a bag, such as a school bag or backpack, only pack what is needed. Pack the heaviest objects closest to the child's back.



Pushing better than pulling

When you need to shift objects, prefer to push them rather than pull them



Correct Postures in Housework

* While performing tasks like sweeping, mopping the floor, making beds and cleaning the house, bend from the knees rather than from the back



* Use a vacuum cleaner and a mop at the end of a stick.

* Sit on a stool as tall as the kitchen platform while cooking.

Height of kitchen and bathroom sinks

* Kitchen and bathroom sinks should always be a little above the waist level.

* Where the sinks are set into platforms, there should be very little space between the basin and the platform-edge, in order to avoid bending down while you wash hands, dishes, vegetables etc.

* The taps should be fixed at such a height that you don't have to bend forward while working.



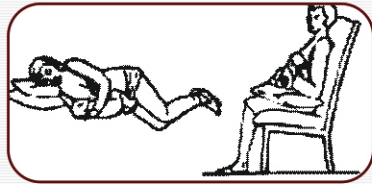
Back care during pregnancy

Hormone changes during pregnancy cause the ligaments around your pelvis to loosen. During and after pregnancy you need to be careful not to put strain on your back.

* While sleeping on the back, a pillow should be placed under both knees, so that back- muscles are relaxed. It is advisable to sleep on one side with both knees bent, and a pillow between the legs.

* While breast-feeding, sleep on one side, or sit up straight in a chair and place your child on a pillow in your lap.

* While changing nappies or the baby's clothes, place the baby on a table so that you do not have to bend down.



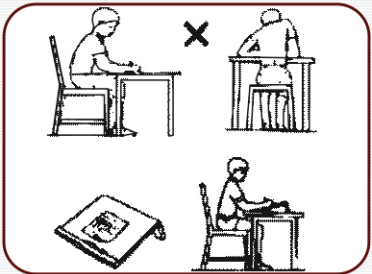
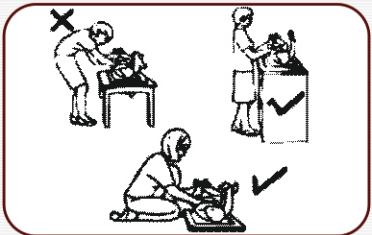
Back & Neck Posture in Children

• Make sure your child takes breaks from sitting.

• Encourage your child to be active.

* The height of the child's desk must be a little higher than the child's waist height while studying.

* Inclination pads should be placed on study- tables of children. This ensures that their back and neck remain straight while reading, writing and drawing. They should be able to look at their books without bending their neck and back.



Wrong Habits

A fatty diet and a sedentary lifestyle increase weight. Being overweight contributes to back-pain. A large stomach or pot-belly increases pressure on the lumbar vertebrae and causes persistent and frequent back pain.

Use of tobacco increases nicotine in blood, which constricts blood-vessels and prevents the healing process if discs or muscles have been damaged. As a result the pain is pro- longed.

Cradling mobile-phones between the neck and shoulder while driving or performing other tasks increases the possibility of neck-pain. Telephone operators should use head- phones or blue-tooth technology so they can work with their necks straight.

Be Active

Regular physical activity will help keep your back strong and flexible. Aim for 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity physical activity, most days of the week. Walking, swimming, gentle jogging, yoga and cycling are some physical activities you might enjoy. Build physical activity into your everyday life. For example, use the stairs instead of the lift.

Specific exercises that strengthen your abdominal (stomach) and back muscles can help prevent back pain.



KEEP STRESS TO A MINIMUM

** Stress can be a factor for developing back pain and it can also aggravate pain that you do develop - so it's important we keep it under control.*

** When you are worried or anxious, your muscles become tense. This can cause back pain or, if you already suffer from back pain, can make it worse.*

To reduce your risk of stress-related back pain:

- *Learn to recognise stress in your life*
 - *Find ways that help you relax and manage stress.*
 - *Physical activity is a good way of releasing tension and stress.*
-



Warning Signs

Be sure to call your doctor if:

- Your back pain is from an accident or injury such as a fall or blow to your back.
- Your pain doesn't ever go away, even at night or when you lie down.
- You have extreme weakness in your legs, or you develop a problem with urinating or controlling your bowels.
- You have a history of cancer.
- You have fewer or unexpected weight loss.
- It's been a few days and your pain is getting worse.
- You're really worried about the pain.

Stay Positive



“The way you think about pain can shape how you experience it. If you feel afraid, this can make your muscles tense up, adding to your pain. When this fear keeps you from moving, your body gets weaker, you feel stressed, and the whole cycle starts over again. Fear of making things worse is typically the biggest hurdle to doing what's best for your back. Instead, try relaxation techniques and gentle exercises to help ease pain.”

**- Andrew Marsh, PT, Cert. MDT,
Physical Therapist, U-M Spine Program**

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Dr Amit Shridhar is an ortho-spine surgeon associated with sant parmanand hospital, delhi. He did his MCh from dundee, united kingdom. He did his fellowship in spine surgery from various renowned institutions in India. He has an experience of performing more than a thousand spine surgeries for various spine related diseases. He has a keen interest in academics and has many publications to his credit. He is actively involved in teaching of DNB students.



SPINE CARE
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Your Back, Our Care



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- * Surgery For Canal Stenosis and Myelopathy
- * Kyphoplasty and Vertebroplasty
- * Spine Fracture Surgery
- * Spine Tuberculosis Surgery
- * Cervical Spondylosis and Sciatica Treatment
- * Spine Tumour Surgery
- * Minimal Access Spine Surgery
- * Facet Joint Injection/ Epidural Steroid Injection/Root Block Injection

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