Back & Spine Care

Maintaining good posture is really important for a healthy back. The first thing to remember is to always be aware of your back. Whenever you are driving in a car or sitting in a chair with a high back, remember to push your navel back toward your spine, and hold your torso upright.

Slouched shoulders are sometimes a bad habit for many people who have office jobs, or work at a computer or on the telephone. If you have a tendency to round your upper back, exercises that retract the shoulder blades and stretch the chest and front of the shoulders will help.

When standing for long periods of time, check that your abdominals are pulled in and your hips are slightly tucked under with your knees relaxed. Wearing high heels can encourage a sway back which can result in back pain and fatigue. And finally, check your posture whenever you pass by a mirror or a reflective window — it's a good reminder to keep your back straight throughout the day.

DO   **DON'T**

Bend at the hips and knees and not at the waist. Keep your back straight and use your legs for lifting.

Hold and carry objects close to you.

REST POSITIONS

BACKLYING

DO   **DON'T**

SIDELYING

Curl up on your side with your knees slightly bent.

Optional – you can put a pillow between your knees for extra comfort.

Do not put your arms above your head. The above positions can cause a swayback.
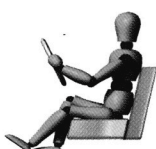
DO   **SITTING**   **DON'T**

Use good body mechanics when sitting in a chair.

Sit straight with the natural curve of your back.

Try to keep your knees higher than your hips. Do not slouch. This takes stress off of the low back.

Putting your legs straight on an ottoman can strain your low back.

CAR

For proper seating in a car, keep your knees the same level as your hips and the seat back in a comfortable position with your back straight. Do not slouch.
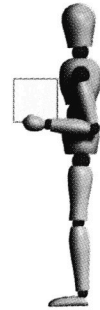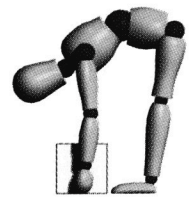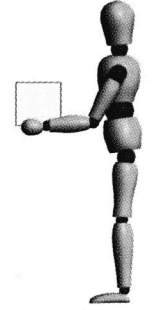
RULES TO LIVE BY

1. Avoid bending from your waist only; bend at the knees and hips.
2. Avoid lifting heavy objects higher than your waist.
3. Always turn and face the object you wish to lift.
4. Avoid carrying unbalanced loads.
5. Hold heavy objects close to your body.
6. Never carry or move anything which you cannot handle with ease.
7. Avoid sudden movements. Learn to move more deliberately, smoothly and gracefully.
8. Change positions frequently.
9. In mopping, vacuuming, raking, hoeing, etc. always work with the tool close to the body. Never use a "giant" step and a long reach in these activities. Hold with two hands and move your body back and forth.
10. Sit down to dress: shoes and socks, etc. Don't bend from the waist while trying to balance on one foot.
11. Women should wear low heels.

DO   **STANDING**   **DON'T**

Stand with one foot on a stool to help relieve pressure on the back.

You should try to stand in a natural comfortable position.