

Shipshewana Clinic
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BACK CARE...KEEPING A STRAIGHT BACK!

LIFTING

Bend your knees, not your back! Lift with your legs and hold object close to your body. Lift objects only chest high. When the load is heavy, get help and plan ahead to avoid sudden load shifts. Always be sure of your footing.

WALKING - STANDING

Stand with one foot up, and change positions often. Bend with the knees to keep back straight. Walk with good posture by keeping your head high, chin tucked in, pelvis forward, and your toes straight ahead. Make sure to wear comfortable shoes.

DRIVING

Move your car seat forward to keep knees bent and higher than your hips. Sit straight and drive with both hands on the steering wheel.

SITTING

Sit in chairs low enough to place both feet on the floor with your knees higher than your hips. You may cross your legs or put your feet up on a stool. Sit firmly against the back of your chair.

SLEEPING

A good night's sleep on a firm mattress is good for you and your back. Sleep on your side with your knees bent, or on your back with a pillow under your knees.

HELPFUL HINTS

Learn and practice good posture and body mechanics. A straight, properly aligned back avoids unnecessary wear and tear.

Test your posture by standing with your back against a wall. You will learn the mechanics of good posture by trying to straighten your back. A lazy slouch posture or "military" position increases the curves in your back. Many people develop poor posture early in life. Teenagers may tend to slouch to be "cool". Tall girls and boys may try to look shorter by slumping. Short people try to look tall and generally have good posture. Good posture does prevent backaches.

Straighten the curve in your neck by standing tall with your chin slightly tucked in. You can straighten the curve in your low back (sway-back) by tucking in your stomach and tilting your pelvis forward (pelvic tilt)...tighten the muscles in your buttocks and bend your knees slightly.

If you are experiencing back strain, take a few moments off and give your back a break. Here are some rest positions that can relieve your back by straightening your spine and tilting the pelvis forward.

STRAIN RELIEF

- 1.) Assume a squatting position, holding on to the back of a chair. 2-5 minutes is all that is necessary.
- 2.) Lean forward in your chair and lower your head to your knees for 2-5 minutes.
- 3.) Lie on your back, flat on the floor and place your legs on a chair. For maximum relief, this position should be held for 5-15 minutes.