

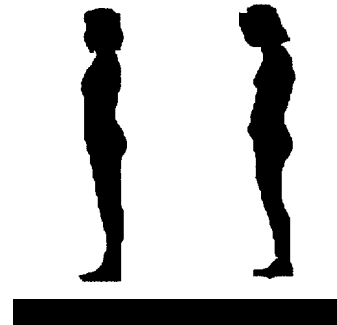
YOUR BACK AND HOW TO CARE FOR IT

Whatever the cause of low back pain, part of its treatment is the correction of faulty posture. But good posture is not simply a matter of "standing tall." It refers to correct use of the body at all times. In fact, for the body to function in the best of health it must be so used that no strain is put upon muscles, joints, bones, and ligaments. To prevent low back pain, avoiding strain must become a way of life, practiced while lying, sitting, standing, walking, working, and exercising. When body position is correct, internal organs have enough room to function normally and blood circulates more freely.

With the help of this guide, you can begin to correct the positions and movements which bring on or aggravate backache. Particular attention should be paid to the positions recommended for resting, since it is possible to strain the muscles of the back and neck even while lying in bed. By learning to live with good posture, under all circumstances, you will gradually develop the proper carriage and stronger muscles needed to protect and support your back.

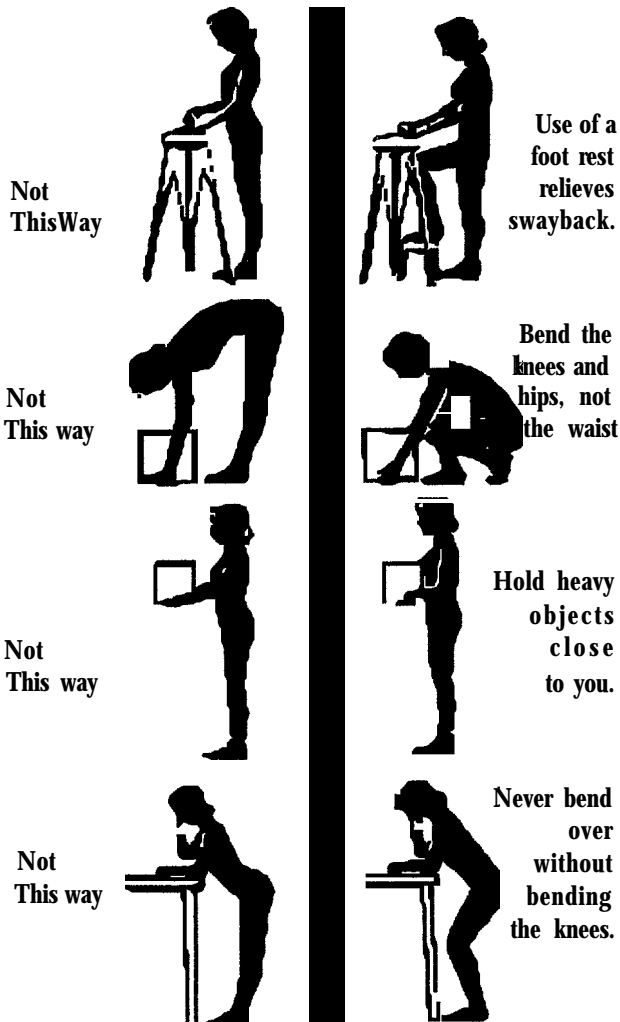
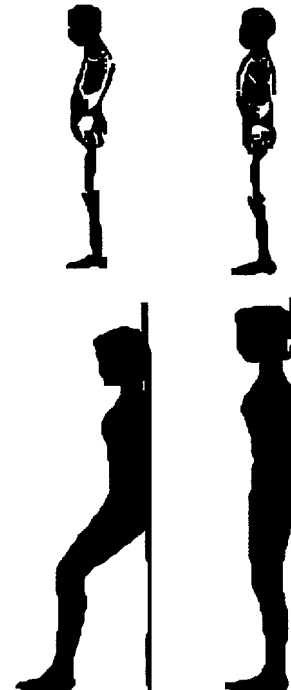
Incorrect:
Lower back is arched or hollow.

Incorrect:
Upper back stooped, lower back is arched, abdomen sags.



Incorrect:
Note how, in strained position, pelvis tilts forward, chin is out, and ribs are down, crowding internal organs.

Correct:
In correct position, chin is in, head up, back flattened, pelvis held straight.



How to Stay on Your Feet Without Tiring Your Back
It is restful to change from one task to another before fatigue sets in. Rest between chores and check body position frequently, drawing in the abdomen, flattening the back, bending the knees slightly.

LOW BACK CARE

(Sheet 2 of 3)

Check Your Carriage Here

In correct, fully erect posture, a line dropped from the ear will go through the tip of the shoulder, middle of hip, back of kneecap, and front of anklebone. To find the correct standing position: Stand one foot away from wall. Now sit against wall, bending knees slightly. Tighten abdominal and buttock muscles. This will tilt the pelvis back and flatten the lower spine. Holding this position, inch up the wall to standing position, by straightening the legs. Now walk around the room, maintaining the same posture. Place back against wall again to see if you have held it.

How to Sit Correctly

A back's best friend is a straight, hard chair. If you can't get the chair you prefer, learn to sit properly on whatever chair you get. To correct sitting position from forward slump: Throw head back, then bend it forward to pull in the chin. This will straighten the back. Now tighten abdominal muscles to raise the chest. Check position frequently.

How to Put Your Back to Bed

For proper bed posture, a firm mattress is essential. Bedboards sold commercially or devised at home may be used with soft mattresses. Bedboards preferably should be made of 1/4-inch plywood. Faulty sleeping positions intensify swayback and result not only in backache but in numbness, tingling, and pain in arms and legs.

Relieve strain by sitting well forward. Flatten back by tightening abdominal muscles.



Use of footrest relieves swayback. Aim is to have knees higher than hips.



Correct way to sit while driving, close to pedals. Use seatbelt. Special backrests available commercially.



TV slumps lead to strained neck and shoulders.



If chair is too high, swayback is increased.



Keep neck and back in as straight a line as possible with the spine. Bend forward from hips.



Driver's seat too far from pedals emphasizes curve in lower back.



Strain reading position. Forward thrusting strains muscles of neck and head.



Incorrect: Lying flat on back makes swayback worse.



Use of high pillow strains neck, arms, shoulders.



Sleeping face down exaggerates swayback, strains neck and shoulders.



Bending one hip and knee does not relieve swayback.



Correct: Lying on side with knees bent effectively flattens the back. Flat pillow may be used to support neck, especially when shoulders are broad.



Sleeping on back is restful and correct when knees are properly supported.



Raise the foot of the mattress eight inches to discourage sleeping on the abdomen.



Proper arrangement of pillows for resting or reading in bed.

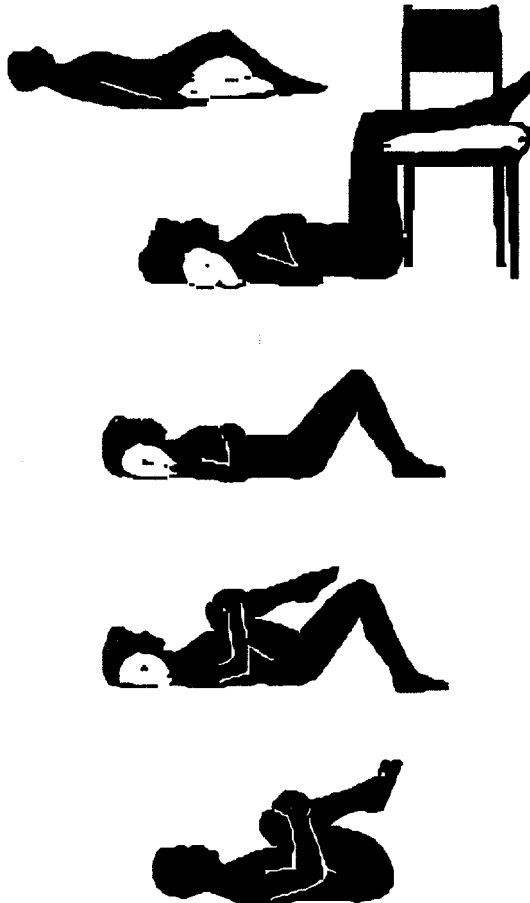


A straight-back chair used behind a pillow makes a serviceable backrest.

When Doing Nothing, Do It Right

· Rest is the first rule for the tired, painful back. The following positions relieve pain by taking all pressure and weight off the back and legs.

· Note pillows under knees to relieve strain on the spine. For complete relief and relaxing effect, these positions should be maintained from 5 to 25 minutes.



Exercise--Without Gelling Out of Bed

Exercises to be performed while lying in bed are aimed not so much at strengthening muscles, as at teaching correct positioning. But muscles used correctly become stronger and in time are able to support the body with the least amount of effort.

1. Do all exercises in this position. Legs should not be straightened.
2. Bring knees up to chest. Lower slowly but do not straighten leg. Relax. Repeat with each leg 10 times.
3. Bring both knees slowly up to chest. Tighten muscles of abdomen, press back flat against bed. Hold knees to chest 20 seconds then lower slowly. Relax. Repeat 5 times. This exercise gently stretches the shortened muscles of the lower back, while strengthening abdominal muscles. Clasp knees, bring them up to chest, at the same time coming to a sitting position. Rock back and forth.

Exercise--Without Attracting Attention

Use these inconspicuous exercises whenever you have a spare moment during the day, both to relax tension and improve the tone of important muscle groups.

1. Rotate shoulders forward and backward.
2. Turn head slowly side to side.
3. Watch an imaginary plane take off; just below the right shoulder. Stretch neck, follow it slowly as it moves up, around and down, disappearing below the other shoulder. Repeat, starting on left side.
4. Slowly, slowly, touch left ear to left shoulder; right ear to right shoulder. Raise both shoulders to touch ears, drop them as far down as possible.
5. At any pause in the day--waiting for an elevator to arrive, for a traffic light to change--pull in abdominal muscles, tighten, hold for the count of eight without breathing. Relax slowly. Increase the count gradually after the first week, practice breathing normally with the abdomen flat and contracted. Do this sitting, standing, or walking.

Rules to live By--From Now On

1. Never bend from the waist only; bend the hips and knees.
2. Never lift a heavy object higher than your waist.
3. Always turn and face the object you wish to lift.
4. Avoid carrying unbalanced loads; hold heavy objects close to your body.
5. Carry nothing heavier than you can manage with ease.
6. Never lift or move heavy furniture. Wait for someone to help or to do it.
7. Avoid sudden movements, or sudden overloading of muscles. Learn to move deliberately, swinging the legs from the hips.
8. Learn to keep the head in line with the spine when standing, sitting or lying in bed.
9. Put soft chairs and deep couches on your "don't sit" list. During prolonged sitting, cross your legs to rest your back.
10. Medical personnel can determine when low back pain is due to faulty posture and can prescribe proper exercises.
11. Omit any exercise which arches or overstrains the lower back, such as backward bends, forward bends, touching the toes with the knees straight.
12. Women should wear shoes with moderate heels; all pairs should be about the same height, Avoid changing from high to low heels.
13. Put a footrest under your desk and another one under a baby's crib.
14. Avoid bending over a regular bed to change a baby's diaper.
15. Use a rocking chair. Rocking rests the back by changing the muscle groups used.
16. Train yourself to use your abdominal muscles to flatten your lower abdomen. In time, this muscle contraction will become habitual.

© Copyright, Schering Corporation, Bloomfield, NJ. Used by permission.