

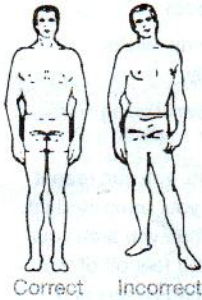
Maintaining Good Posture

The importance of maintaining good posture

Making sure your posture is correct is important to keep your spine healthy and to avoid developing painful skeletal or muscular conditions. If you already suffer from lower back pain, developing and maintaining a healthy posture can help to relieve some of that pain.

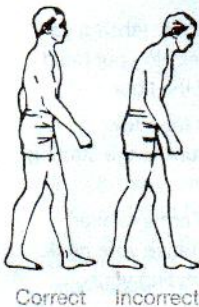
1. Correct posture when standing

- Stand straight, with your head up
- Keep your shoulders back and avoid hunching your upper back
- Your knees and feet should face forward, with your legs relaxed
- Your weight should be supported evenly on both feet
- If you are standing straight, your arms will hang loosely at your sides and not in front of your body
- Avoid high heel shoes and tight clothing



2. Correct posture when walking

- Maintain your upright posture, with your shoulders back and properly aligned with the rest of your body
- Keep your head up
- Your arms should be relaxed and swing naturally
- Feet and knees should be facing forward
- Flat feet, or feet that are rotated inward or outward too much change your walking posture and may cause muscle fatigue and pain in your legs or back. If you think this applies to you, visit a podiatrist who will help to modify your footwear and improve your walking posture
- Always wear comfortable shoes and avoid high heels



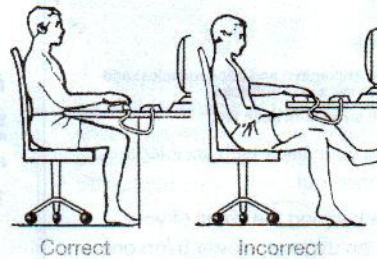
3. Correct posture when sitting and working at a desk

- Your chair height and back should be adjusted so that you can sit comfortably with your back, legs, arms and neck muscles relaxed
- Keep your back aligned with the back of the chair - avoid slouching or leaning forward

- The angle of the back of the chair should be 90°, or slightly reclining
- Your chair should have a lumbar support that maintains the normal lower curve of the spine
- Adjust your chair height so that your thighs are parallel to the floor with your feet flat on the floor
- Sit with your shoulders straight
- The top of your computer screen should be at eye level
- Your working surface should allow you to keep your forearms slightly angled downward and your forearms, wrists and hands in a straight line

Tips to avoid muscle fatigue while working

- Do not cross your legs
- Keep everything you need within easy reach so that you do not have to bend or stretch to reach them
- Keep your mouse close to your keyboard
- If you use the telephone a lot, use a headphone set to keep your hands free while you talk
- Avoid holding the telephone to your ear with your shoulder
- Take regular breaks to get up, walk around and stretch



4. Correct posture when driving

- Adjust your seat so that it is a comfortable distance from the pedals, with your legs relaxed
- Adjust your seat back so that you can hold the steering wheel with your shoulders and upper arms relaxed and elbows bent at 90°
- Your back should be supported by the seat with a lumbar support
- Adjust your mirrors so that you can easily see what is behind you without having to turn your head too much or lean over
- Always wear comfortable shoes and avoid high heels

Tips to avoid muscle strain while driving

- Maintain your upright posture, don't hunch over the steering wheel or slouch
- Keep both hands on the steering wheel - avoid resting your right arm on the car door

- When you stop, avoid muscle tension in your legs by using the hand brake and not riding the clutch
- If you use a cellular phone in the car, always use a headset or hands-free kit

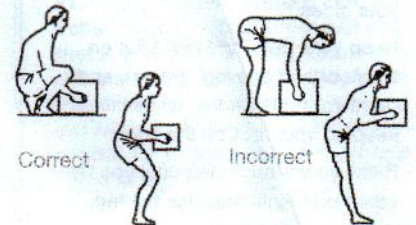


5. Correct posture when lifting and carrying

- When lifting or putting down a weight, bend at your knees and keep your back straight
- While lifting and carrying, hold the weight close to your body
- Maintain the weight in your legs and not in your back (try not to lean too far forward or backwards)

Tips to avoid muscle strain while carrying

- It is better to make several trips with lighter loads than one trip with a heavy load
- Use a bag on wheels or trolley to move your load
- Avoid carrying weight with only one side of the body - if possible divide your weight (e.g. shopping bags) into two equal lighter weights and carry one bag with each hand
- If you have to carry with one arm only, switch arms frequently
- If you use a backpack, use both straps - one on each shoulder, and keep your backpack as light as possible



6. Correct posture when lying down

- A firm mattress provides better back support, but choose a mattress that is comfortable for you
- Your pillow should be comfortable and maintain proper alignment of your head and shoulders

If you have back pain:

- Sleeping on your side or back is usually more comfortable than sleeping on your front
- When lying on your side, try placing a pillow between your knees
- When lying on your back, try placing a pillow under your knees



Norflex Co The No. 1 prescribed muscle relaxant brand¹

Revised by Dr. David Webb BSc(Hons), MBCh (Wits), N Cert Ex Sc. (HFPA). May 2012.

