



# *Regal and Lakeside Medical Groups present:* **Back Health for the Workplace**

Most of us get back pain at some point in our lives. It may be caused by a sports-related injury, an accident, or a congenital condition such as scoliosis. However, in many cases, back pain develops during the course of everyday life. That's why it is important to understand what causes back pain and what you can do to prevent it.

## **Back Pain at Work**

Whether it's dull and achy or sharp and stabbing, back pain can make it hard to concentrate at work. Many occupations, such as construction, nursing, and routine office work, can place extreme demands on your back. A number of factors can contribute to back pain at work, including:

- **Force.** Exerting too much force on your back, such as by lifting or moving heavy objects, can cause injury.
- **Repetition.** Repeating certain movements, especially those that involve twisting or rotating your spine, can result in back injury.
- **Inactivity.** Sitting down for long periods puts 40% more pressure on your back and it causes inactive joints to age quicker and lose lubrication. A desk job may contribute to back pain, especially if you have poor posture, or if you sit in a chair with inadequate back support.

## **Good Posture is Good for Your Health**

Good posture protects you against back pain and improves your overall health and appearance. Poor posture, on the other hand, promotes back pain and can affect the position and function of your abdominal organs, inhibit breathing and oxygen intake, and cause headaches.

## **Healthy Tips for You!**

### **Healthy Tip #1**

Stay hydrated to maintain soft tissue elasticity and fluidity in your joints and spinal discs.

### **Healthy Tip #2**

Leaving your desk for a quick break at least once an hour can reduce pressure on your spine and boost healthy blood circulation.

### **Healthy Tip #3**

Regular exercise such as walking and bicycling promotes good posture and prevents injury.



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## Here are a few tips to help you develop good posture:

- Sit at a 135-degree angle to reduce compression of the discs in the spine.
- Make sure your office chair supports the curve of your spine.
- When you look at your computer, your lower back should be supported, and your head should be straight – not lurching forward.
- Try using a lumbar support pillow for lower back support.
- Elevate your arms and your legs so that they are parallel to the floor.

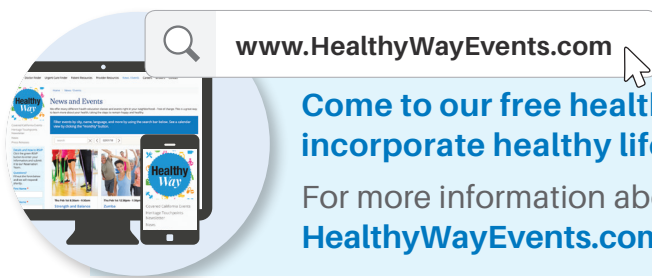


Adapted from Publications, Harvard Health. "Posture and back health". Harvard Health. Mar. 2014. Live Well. "Back Pain at Work". NHS Choices

## Break the Habit of Bad Posture

It's difficult to avoid the pitfalls of sitting and slouching. However, there are plenty of tricks you can use to improve your posture gradually - at work and during the course of day-to-day life. Follow these simple guidelines to keep your back in good shape:

- **Standing:** Keeping one foot in front of the other, with your knees slightly bent, takes pressure off your lower back.
- **Sitting:** Sitting with your knees slightly higher than your hips provides good lower back support.
- **Reaching:** Stand on a stool to reach things that are above your shoulder level.
- **Moving Heavy Items:** Pushing is easier on your back than pulling. Use your arms and legs to start the push. If you must lift the item, get someone to help you.
- **Lifting:** Kneel down on one knee with the other foot flat on the floor, as near as possible to the item you are lifting. Be sure to lift with your legs.
- **Sleeping:** Sleeping on your back puts 55 lbs. of pressure on your upper body. You can cut the pressure in half by placing a few pillows under your knees.
- **Weight Control:** Additional weight puts a strain on your back. Keep within 10 lbs. of your ideal weight for a healthier back.
- **Quit Smoking:** Nicotine restricts the flow of blood to the discs that cushion your vertebrae.
- **Minor Back Pain:** Treat minor back pain with anti-inflammatories and gentle stretching, followed by an ice pack.



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