

Proper Posture

Many common body aches and annoyances can be improved just by taking the time to correct your posture.

Practice these techniques to minimize injury and promote proper posture all the time.

While Standing:

Keep knees slightly bent, and keep your core engaged. Keep your head in line with your shoulders, spine and waist.

While Sitting:

Make sure your feet are flat on the floor or on a foot rest so that your knees and hips are at a 90° angle. Make sure your low back is supported with the curve of the chair or place a small pillow or towel to promote support.

When lifting:

Utilize your strong leg muscles to lift instead of your smaller and weaker back muscles. Also, make sure the object stays close to your body. Never pivot while carrying a heavy object.

Overhead Loads:

Use a stool to help you reach for things that are higher than your shoulders.

When Moving Heavy Items:

Pushing is easier than pulling. Sliding is even better. If the item is too heavy, ask someone to help you lift the object.

When Carrying:

Two smaller objects in each hand are easier to carry than one large object. If this can't be avoided, keep the large object close to your body.

When Sleeping:

Aim to sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees. If you need to lie on your side, make sure there is still a pillow between your knees.

Some other healthy habits to consider when you want to reduce chronic back and joint pain:

Physical Activity:

Exercise can help reduce musculoskeletal injuries. It can also contribute to increased awareness, sustained energy levels and improved coordination.

Quit Smoking:

Nicotine can reduce the flow of blood to the discs which cushion your vertebrae. Also, chronic coughing can lead to back pain as well.

Assessing Your Posture

Take a look at old photographs of yourself or your reflection in the bathroom mirror. Do you see some room for improvement? We all can improve our posture one way or another and the best way to get started is taking an honest look at yourself. Fill in the blanks on the next page to evaluate and correct your posture. Refer back to this from time to time to make sure you are maintaining these new healthy habits.

Assessing Your Posture

GOAL: Overtime if you consistently practice proper form, you may not need to correct your posture as often.

Standing Posture

Date:

Posture	Needs Correcting? (Yes/No)
Shoulders Back	
Ears in line with Shoulders	
Legs are shoulder width apart	
Knees are slightly bent (not locked)	
Feet are pointing forward	
Weight evenly distributed from heel to ball of foot	

Sitting Posture

Date:

Posture	Needs Correcting? (Yes/No)
Knees bent at approximately a 90° angle	
Both feet or flat on the floor or on foot stool if cannot reach floor	
Weight distributed evenly across hips	
Shoulder back	
Arms at a 90° angle on desk (or resting on your lap)	
Create lumbar support with ergonomic chair or by placing a folded towel by your low back	
Head back with ears in line with shoulders	
Stand up and move around every 30 minutes or so	

Sleeping Posture:

Date:

Posture	Needs Correcting? (Yes/No)
Are you lying on your back?	
If not, are you lying on your side?	
Is there a pillow under your knees (lying on back) or between your knees (lying on your side)?	
Pillow is supporting your head but not under your shoulders	