



IN GOOD HEALTH NEWSLETTER...

MAY

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May:

Correct Posture Month

Posture Tips

Health Habits That Mess With Your Back

Obesity & Low Back Pain Conditions

Correct posture month encourages people to think about how posture can affect overall health. Posture refers to the position a person's body is in while they are sitting or standing. Sedentary activities such as sitting, reading, playing video games, using a computer and more physical activities like gardening, bending or lifting objects, are often performed with poor posture. Poor posture can negatively impact a person's health. Back problems are an obvious result of poor posture with back pain being the most common problem. Side effects from medicines used to control back pain can have a huge impact on a person's physical and mental well being.

Poor posture can affect our health in other ways too. For example, slouching can give rise to jaw pain and headache. Poor posture places more strain on the muscles and joints and can lead to arthritis. Poor posture can also affect breathing, and impair both the circulatory and digestive systems.



- To improve posture when standing, keep your head held up, shoulders back and stomach tucked in.



When sitting, keep legs bent 90 - 120 degrees perpendicular to the floor, buttocks touching the back of the chair, with weight evenly distributed over both hips. Feet should be flat on the floor. When sitting at a table or desk, have the arms and elbows rest on the surface taking strain off the shoulders.

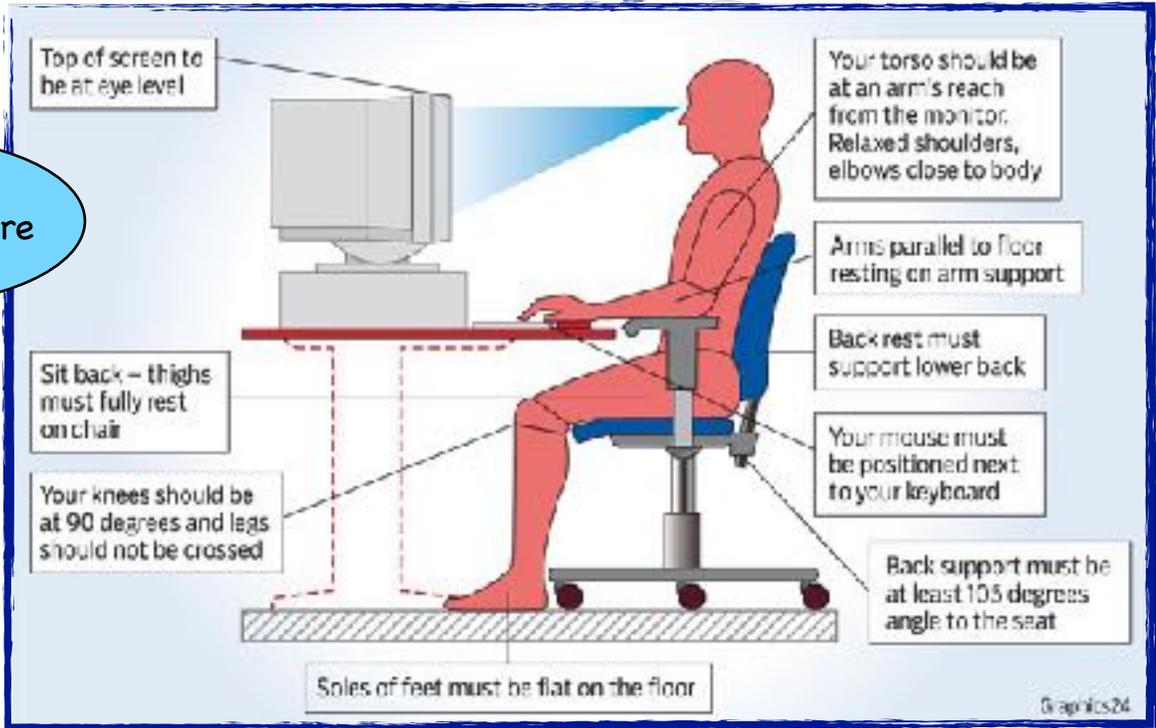
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Posture Tips!

Correct Computer Posture



Open Up

To stay limber, try to get up for a couple minutes every half hour and stretch, walk, or stand.

Easy Exercises Every morning and night, lie down on the floor and make slow "snow angels" with your arms for two or three minutes. Do these exercises slowly and stop if you feel anything worse than mild discomfort or pain.

Strengthen Your Core Pilates and yoga are great ways to build up the strength of your "core"—the muscles of your abdomen and pelvic area. These muscles form the foundation of good posture, and a strong core can have many other benefits, from improving your athletic performance to preventing urinary incontinence.

Yoga In addition to helping to increase body awareness and core strength, yoga is an excellent way to build and maintain flexibility and strengthen muscles throughout your body, Dr. Bean says. Hatha or restorative yoga are good places to start if you're a beginner.

Lift Weights The vertebral compression fractures that subtract from our height—and can lead to the "dowager's hump" in the upper back that's a hallmark of old age—are due to the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis. Women—and men—can prevent these changes with weight-bearing exercises, like walking, stair climbing, and weight lifting.

Vitamin D Vitamin D is essential for bone health, and may help us maintain our muscles too. Try to get it from a **healthy diet**. A **recent report from the Institute of Medicine**, an independent, nonprofit organization, found that most of us get enough vitamin D from food and sunlight without taking supplements. The recommended dietary intake for vitamin D is 600 IU a day for women up to age 70 and 800 IU for women older than 70.

Eat Healthy We all know the bone benefits of calcium. It is recommended that women 19 to 50 years old get 1,000 milligrams of calcium daily. For older women, it's 1,200 milligrams. But again, it may be best to get calcium from food rather than supplements.

Consider Medication Your doctor will be able to tell you whether you need a bone mineral density scan to detect osteopenia or osteoporosis.

3 Health Habits That Mess With Your Back

3 of the most typical New Year's health related resolutions are to quit smoking, lose weight and get more exercise. But did you know that following through on these commitments may also help you relieve back pain? A 2008 study from Sweden found that among other things, being a **regular smoker** and having a **BMI over 25** raise the risk low back pain.



Do You know your BMI? Less than 25 is ideal

BMI stands for Body Mass Index. It is a measure of how much body fat a person has, and is calculated using your height and weight. If you don't know what your BMI is you can calculate it here:

5'0"	19	21	21	22	23	25	25	26	28	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
5'1"	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	25	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
5'2"	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	
5'3"	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	29	29	30	31	32	33	34	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	
5'4"	17	18	19	20	20	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	
5'5"	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
5'6"	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	40	
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5'9"	15	16	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	
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6'0"	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	
6'1"	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	31	31	32	32	
6'2"	13	14	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	31	
6'3"	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	
6'4"	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	29	30	
6'5"	12	13	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	27	28	29	29	

UNDERWEIGHT

NORMAL

OVERWEIGHT

OBESE

3 Health Habits That Mess With Your Back

- 1. Quitting Smoking** For smokers with back problems, quitting may yield an array of benefits. Smoking may reduce the blood supply to your spinal structures. It also interferes with bone metabolism and increases the risk of fracture - especially if, in addition to being a smoker, you don't exercise regularly. If you are planning to have a spinal fusion, your post operative road to recovery may be more difficult as a smoker. This is because smoking increases the risk for a non-union (called pseudoarthrosis.) In essence, if you have a pseudoarthrosis, you may need to redo the original surgery. And if the above facts about smoking and back pain are not enough to get you motivated to quit, perhaps the thought of experiencing pain unnecessarily will be. Smoking is thought to influence the perception pain - by amplifying it during those times when nicotine is denied.
- 2. Successful Weight Management.** Perhaps the most obvious danger to your spine of carrying extra weight is the extra pressure this puts on your joints, soft tissue and posture. An expanded girth in front may take your pelvis into anterior pelvic tilt, which in turn may tighten up your low back muscles or cause strain. The extra compression on your spinal column may hasten degenerative changes and/or increase your risk for back conditions such as herniated disc, spondylolysis, spondylolisthesis, DISH (hardening of spinal ligaments) and more. And similar to smoking, having back surgery while overweight or obese may present problems you otherwise may not have to face. In particular, the higher your BMI the more at risk for surgical complications you may be.
- 3. Get Regular Exercise** It is well known that exercise may help improve your health status and prevent disease. Exercise also plays a big role in back pain prevention as well as many types of spine rehab. Strong, flexible muscles - especially those of the hips, shoulders and core help align your spine, support your as you move and prevent injury. The good news is that exercising for back pain relief does not have to take a lot of time or be an intense workout. In fact, when you first start. working moderately may yield the best results. Here are a couple of beginner programs to get you started.

Obesity & Low Back Pain Conditions

Back pain is a very common problem in heavy people. According to some practitioners who see overweight spine patients regularly, being heavy is associated with certain back conditions.

Pressure on the Spine. Extra weight puts added pressure on the spine, which can cause pain, says Kevin Cichocki, DC, clinical chiropractor and founder of Palladian Health in Buffalo, NY. "It has long been known that a rise in body weight results in a geometric increase in the pressure on the spine." For those who are morbidly obese, Cichocki says that potential injury to the spine is even greater. This is due to it degenerative changes in the vertebral column it can cause, he says. "The pressure may increase your risk of herniated disc, degenerative disc disease and back strain."

Obesity & Herniated Disc. "The extra pressure that weight puts on your spine can -- over time -- cause a wearing away of the outer fibers of the disc, increasing your risk of an injury." Being obese may also prevent you from managing pain that is due to herniated disc-related sciatica, he adds.

Obesity & Back Pain Due to Lordosis
A large belly may pull your pelvis forward, which in turn may increase the curve in your low back (lordosis). The increased lordosis will probably tighten up your back muscles and cause strain or pain. keeping a healthy weight and strong abs (which may help pull your pelvis into neutral alignment) can help you counter the effects of an exaggerated low back curve.

Obesity & Osteoarthritis of the spine
Obesity is widely acknowledged as a risk factor for osteoarthritis, and can negatively affect treatment outcomes. The authors says that if you lose at least 10% of your body weight, and you exercise, you may be able to get back in action with less pain.



Obesity & Low Back Pain Conditions

Obesity, Spondylolysis and Spondylolisthesis Spondylolysis and spondylolisthesis are related conditions. Obesity may affect them both by increasing strain in the key L4-L5 (low back) joint. Also, as described above in the section on lordosis, obesity may make things worse by pulling your pelvis forward, accentuating the low back curve (which can increase muscle tension in the area.)

Obesity & Diffuse Idiopathic Hyperostosis Diffuse idiopathic hyperostosis (acronym DISH) is the hardening of one or more spinal ligaments. It is more common in elderly men than other types of people. This back condition has been linked to a high BMI and diabetes.

Obesity and Back Surgery If you are very obese, you may have a higher risk of post-surgical complications. For overweight people, the likelihood is less. A review of medical studies published in the journal *Anesthesia and Analgesics* found that super obese people (i.e., those whose BMIs are higher than 50) are at increased risk for complications related to surgery of any type. People whose BMIs are lower don't seem to have increased risks unless they are also dealing with other health conditions, according to the review.

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Will
losing weight help with my back
pain?

It's only natural to assume that, along with controlling your risk for heart attack, diabetes, stroke and other degenerative diseases, losing weight can help you get rid of back pain. As it turns out, it's likely true. Experts agree that losing weight successfully may result in partial or complete back pain relief. The reason for this, Panagos explains, is that if you are heavier than your ideal weight, your muscles will need to work harder in order to help you accomplish everyday tasks. Plus, the extra load that is put on the spine can take vertebrae out of alignment. "When you lose weight, you are effectively reducing strain on your spinal column and on your back muscles," he adds.

How
thin is thin enough?

Many experts recommend staying within 10 pounds of your ideal weight to keep your back healthy and pain free. And don't forget: Weight loss offers other benefits beyond the well-being of your back. As you've likely heard, shedding the extra pounds may help prevent serious health problems such as heart disease, cancer or diabetes.

Banana Oat Energy Bites



You'll Need

- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 cups rolled oats
- ¼ cup almond butter (or peanut butter, or your favorite nut butter)
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips



How To

- 1 Mash up the bananas in a large mixing bowl.
 - 2 Stir in the rolled oats, almond butter, honey, miniature chocolate chips and cinnamon.
 - 3 Scoop about 2 tablespoons of the mixture and roll into a 1-inch ball. Repeat with the rest of the mixture.
 - 4 Refrigerate for 2 hours, allowing the oats enough time to soften.
 - 5 Store the energy bites in the refrigerator.
- So simple, so tasty, so energizing!

Special thanks to Stacey, of Cape May City Municipality, for making these yummy treats for the staff at a recent wellness event!