

PROPER LIFTING AND BODY MECHANICS

RULES FOR PROPER BODY MECHANICS

1. **Stand Close to the Object**—Avoid reaching and bending and minimize strain on lower back.
2. **Use a Wide Base of Support**—Keep knees shoulder width apart in order to improve your balance and distribute weight evenly.
3. **Lift With Your Legs, not With your Back**—Bend your knees and hips keep your back straight when picking up your load. Even picking up the lightest object incorrectly can cause severe injury! Lift smoothly and slowly; jerking movements may cause strain.
4. **Keep the Load as Close as Possible**—Remain close to the object and keep the object as close to you as possible while carrying.
5. **Pivot With Your Feet**—When changing directions or turning, pivot with your feet. Do not twist your back; let your feet lead the way.



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TIPS FOR A HEALTHY BACK

1. **Maintain a Proper Posture**
 - Sleeping
 - Driving
 - Standing
 - Sitting
2. **Practice Good Body Mechanics**
 - Lifting
 - Carrying
 - Exercising
3. **Stay Active**
 - Flexibility Training
 - Strength Training
 - Aerobic Activity
 - Balance Training
4. **Be Aware of Your Body at ALL Times!!!**



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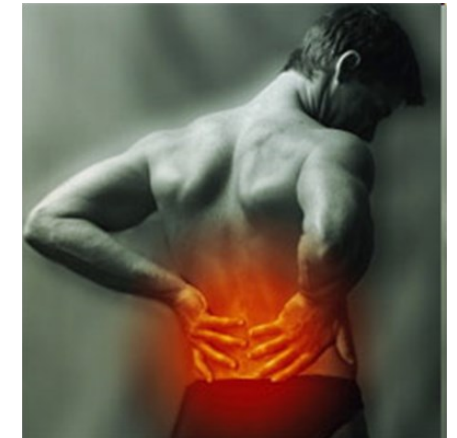
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BACK INJURY PREVENTION

Long hours of physical exertion are often endured by Health Care workers; leading to some of the highest back injury rates in the country, second only to construction workers.

Some work practice issues may include:

- Transferring residents with improper body mechanics
- Poor posture in standing, sitting and sleeping
- Performing unaccustomed physical work



Whether, standing, lifting, driving, sleeping or sitting, there are numerous things you can do to keep your back safe and healthy!

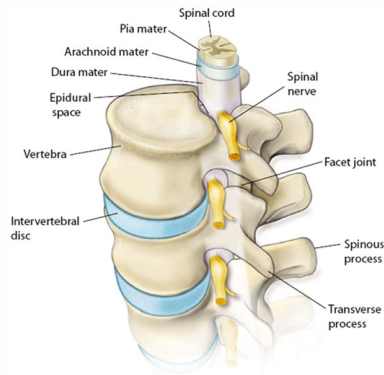
The most successful approach to preventing back injuries for healthcare workers is through preparation and knowledge. Taking the time to learn some “Back Basics” will help you preserve your health and safety.

INTRODUCTION

- Low Back Pain affects 80 % of the Population
- Common Causes include:
 - ⇒ Overuse or overstretching of muscles
 - ⇒ Poor Posture and Body Mechanics
 - ⇒ Muscle Weakness

Functions of the Spine:

- 1) Supports Head and Trunk
- 2) Allows for Movement
- 3) Protects your Spinal Cord
- 4) Acts as a Shock Absorber



Vertebrae:

- Spine has 33 vertebrae divided into Cervical, Thoracic, Lumbar, Sacral and Coccygeal regions.

Discs:

- Separate vertebrae
- Act as a cushion and provide shock absorption.

Ligaments:

- Thin, cord like tissue connecting bone to bone.
- Help to provide structure and stability to joints.

Muscles:

- Help to stabilize spine and allow for proper posture.
- Erector Spinae and Abdominal muscles help us to stand up straight and keep a neutral spine.

Nerves:

- Sensory and Motor nerves send messages to and from muscles and the brain to produce movement.

PROPER POSTURE AND A HEALTHY BACK

A normal healthy spine is shaped in a “Double S curve”:

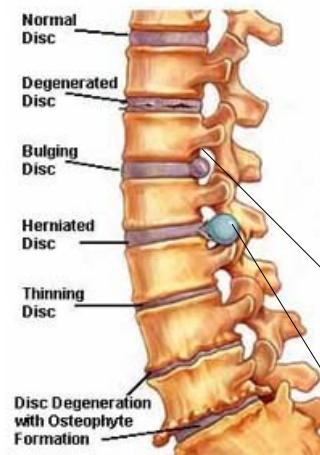
- It is made up of 4 curvatures (2 Kyphotic and 2 Lordotic) which balance each other out and evenly distribute your weight
- An exaggeration of any one of these curves can lead to back pain and injury.
- Every time you step out of this curve you place yourself at risk for injury



Common Back disorders often are caused by:

- Poor body mechanics
- Improper posture
- Stressful living and working conditions
- Loss of flexibility
- General decline in physical fitness

Common Back disorders include:



- Muscle guarding/spasm
- Disc strain or bulge
- Disc herniation
- Muscle strains
- Ligament sprains
- Joint stiffness
- Osteoarthritis

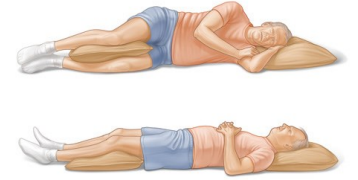
Bulging Disc

Herniated Disc

RULES FOR PROPER POSTURE

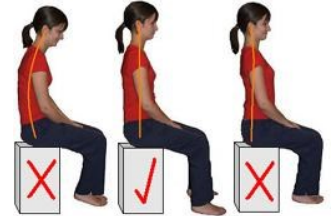
Sleeping:

- In supine, lie on your back with a pillow under your knees and neck.
- In side lying, sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees and under your neck.
- AVOID sleeping on your stomach.



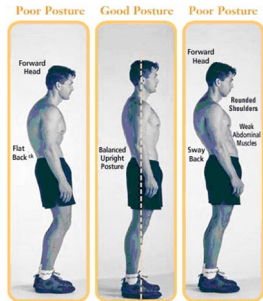
Sitting:

- Sit up straight, chin tucked in, shoulders back.
- Choose a firm surface and sit fully back in the chair.
- Keep abdominals tight.
- Use a lumbar support and an ergonomic chair.
- Take frequent breaks—get up whenever possible.



Standing:

- Wear proper shoes.
- Shift body weight during prolonged standing.
- Keep chin up, shoulder back and knees relaxed.
- Stand with feet apart and knees slightly bent.
- Evenly distribute weight between feet.



Daily Habits:

- Stay healthy and active:

Flexibility, aerobic, strength and balance training are important elements of Back Injury Prevention!

