

25. **Get Enough Sleep:** Sleep is essential to good health, mental alertness, optimum tissue growth and repair. An adequate amount of restful sleep is required to restore the body.

26. **Wear a Supportive Bra:** A supportive bra will reduce strain placed upon the neck and upper back.

27. **Support the Abdomen during Pregnancy:** A protuberant abdomen during pregnancy increases the forward curvature of the low back. This increases strain on the discs and joints of the low back. A pregnancy brace, which supports the pelvis and abdomen, will reduce strain on the low back. The use of a brace should be discussed with an obstetrician and/or spine physician. Such a brace should be fitted by a healthcare professional.

28. **Increase Abdominal Strength:** The abdominal muscles help support the low back and pelvis. The abdominal muscles surround about 2/3 of the lower part of the body. Strengthening the abdominal muscles will increase spinal stability and reduce the risk for spine injury

29. **Frequently Adjust Your Posture:** Alternate between sitting and standing tasks to reduce the duration of persistent stress placed upon the spine. During long periods of standing, rest one foot on a low support, and alternate the feet. When sitting rest both feet on the floor.

30. **Learn to Relax:** Learn and apply relaxation techniques to manage stress both on the job and off the job. This will help to reduce muscle tension and pain from those muscles.



IF BACK OR NECK SYMPTOMS
PERSIST OR PROGRESS,
SEE A SPINE PHYSICIAN.

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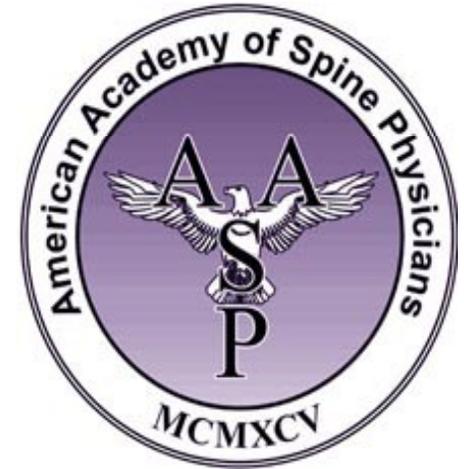
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National Spinecare Awareness Campaign

30 Tips For Better Spine Health



The American Academy of Spine Physicians

*An Organization of Healthcare Professionals Dedicated to
Excellence in Spinecare.*

1. **Exercise Regularly:** Regular exercise and strengthening activities will promote a healthier, stronger and more stable spine. Start an exercise program slowly to give your muscles a chance to warm up. Check with your doctor prior to engaging in an exercise program.

2. **Eat Healthy:** Proper nutrition will support spine development and repair. A proper diet will also help maintain bone density and strengthen spinal tissues, thus reducing the risk for injury.

3. **Maintain Good Posture:** Assume efficient and supportive postures while lying, sitting, and standing to reduce strain on spinal tissues, to reduce the risk for spine injury and to promote spine health.

4. **Invest in a Good Pillow and Mattress:** A good pillow and mattress will facilitate more restorative sleep. A good mattress will support the spine no matter in different positions

5. **Maintain Spine Flexibility:** Regular activity and stretching helps maintain flexibility of the spine. Good flexibility reduces the risk of injury.



6. **Balanced Carrying:** Always attempt to carry items weighing more than 10 pounds in a balanced fashion, dispersing the weight as evenly as possible from right to left. Do not overload your luggage, backpack or purse.

7. **Take Periodic Breaks:** Avoid sustained postures. During episodes of prolonged sitting or standing, periodically take a break, stretch your legs and back. Periodic stretching will help to keep you from tightening up and injuring the spine.

8. **Use Proper Phone Technique and Equipment:** Avoid cradling the phone between the neck and the shoulder. Use a headset if prolonged phone use is required at home or at work.

9. **Sleep on Your Back or Side:** These positions are generally more supportive of the spine than lying face down. Do not sleep on your stomach.

10. **Good Sleep Support:** If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your knees to reduce rotation of the low back and try to keep your legs bent at the knees and hips

which reduces the stress on the low back.

11. **Invest in Proper Shoes and Footwear:** Proper foot and ankle support will reduce stress upon the knees and hips as well as the lower back.

12. **Invest in Good Chairs:** Chairs greatly influence sitting posture. Poor chairs contribute to chronic spine problems; well-designed chairs promote spine health.

13. **Have Regular Spinal Check-Ups:** This will facilitate early detection and timely intervention. It is much easier to prevent a problem than to correct one.

14. **Use Proper Lifting Techniques:** Proper lifting technique will reduce the risk for spine injury. Keep the back straight and bend the legs and hips when lifting. This reduces stress on the lower back. Avoid lifting objects higher than your waist whenever possible. Face the object you wish to lift. When lifting, hold the object close to the body. Do not twist while lifting. When possible, push rather than pull an object, which is easier on the back. Seek help lifting when possible. Lift cautiously and with moderate speed.



15. **Walk Efficiently:** Walking requires the use of over 200 individual muscles. It requires the use of all of the muscles of the spine and pelvis. Walk erect with your head and neck in a neutral position. Avoid slumping while walking. Avoid high heels and platform shoes.

16. **Do Not Overwork:** When possible, modify postures and physical activity to reduce the risk of muscle fatigue and back strain.

17. **Avoid Excessive High-Impact Activities:** Each time you strike your foot during walking, running or jumping, the shock of impact is absorbed by the joints of the feet, ankles, legs, hips and low back. Avoid excessive high impact activities. Wear proper footwear to reduce the degree of shock to the spine.

18. **Think Ergonomically:** Seek the optimum work environment. This requires an adjustable workstation to properly support the extremities and the spine. An efficient work environment will include proper phone equipment, an adjustable chair, an efficient keyboard and adjustable monitor. The work surface should have adjustable height. It should also have proper lighting. A footrest will contribute to reduced stress on the spine. Assume a relaxed yet

supported posture.

19. **Use Products that Promote Good Posture and Spine Health:** Utilize products which support the spine from the ground up. Use support-enhancing products that can be added to poorly designed furniture, seating and shoes.

20. **Listen to Your Back:** Avoid positions and activities which increase back pain or cause pain to radiate down the legs. Avoid positions which elicit numbness or tingling. If back symptoms should persist or progress, see a spine physician. If you are involved in an activity that causes or increases back pain, think about what you can change to alleviate the pain. Your body will usually tell you what it needs if you take time to listen to it.

21. **Maintain Optimum Body Weight:** Excessive body weight increases stress upon all of the tissues of the spine, thereby increasing the risk for abnormal “wear and tear”.



22. **Avoid Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk for many life threatening conditions. Smoking is a habit which promotes tissue inflammation and impairs the healing process.

23. **Get a Spinecare Education:** Whenever possible, learn more about your spine and how to take care of it. Seek insight from a spine physician. Go to websites

written by spine doctors like <http://www.spinephysicians.org> for valuable information which is continuously updated.



24. **Drink Water:** An adequate amount of water is vital to good health. All musculoskeletal tissues require water to function and to repair.