

# Taking care of your back

Minding your posture will do much to improve your spinal column. Being overweight, especially if you have a "pot belly", causes stress on your lower back. It is also necessary to **exercise gently** on a regular basis.

**Posture:** Do not remain in the same position for a long time (at work, sitting on the sofa, lying in bed, etc.). When standing, maintain good posture, keeping your head up and back straight. If you're going to be on your feet for any length of time, place one foot on a low stool or the bottom of an open kitchen cupboard or a shelf at work) and from time to time, shift your weight from one foot to the other. Wear comfortable shoes and avoid high heels.



**Movement:** When turning, turn your whole body. When bathing, making beds, loading the washing machine, and other activities we usually bend over to do, keep your back straight and knees bent.

**Lifting:** When lifting any weight (children, heavy objects, etc.) bend your knees while keeping your back straight and do the lifting as close to your chest as possible. If you need to move or lift heavy objects, ask for help and wear a back

support. Push your grocery cart like a child's stroller instead of pulling it.



**Sleeping:** Your mattress must be comfortable and your pillow must not be too high. Recommended sleeping positions are lying on one side with both legs flexed or with one leg flexed and the other extended or on your back with your legs flexed and a pillow under your knees. To get out of bed, roll on your side facing the edge of the bed, then lower your legs and feet as you sit up.

**At the office:** The computer screen should be placed at eye level, your chair should be low so you can place both feet flat on the floor or, even better, a footrest. Sit deep in your chair to ensure support of your back. Armrests are recommended; the desk should be level with your elbows.



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