

10 Tips for a HEALTHY BACK

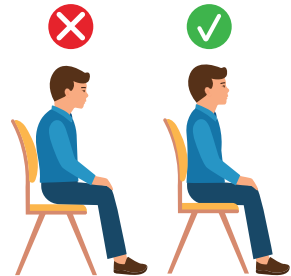


The back and the spine are the epicentre of messages from your body to your brain: they are the control pathway between the two. It is like having a messenger between the two, but if that messenger is not working correctly then it can cause complications.

Looking after your spine is the most important way to protect this pathway. The spinal cord sits within the spine and therefore anything that happens to your spine may affect it. Looking after your spine is important to keeping your nervous system in correct function.

1. Maintain good posture and spinal alignment

Whether sitting or standing, keep your body in alignment with the head, shoulders, and hips in a vertical line. Your chest should be vertical to the floor whether sitting or standing. Keep your back straight and supported. Avoid slouching as slouching places excessive pressure on the discs of the lower back.



2. Use proper lifting technique

When lifting a heavy object, lift using your leg muscles, bending at the knees and hips. Stand close to the object. Pivot with feet and hips, instead of twisting the back.



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3. Engage in regular exercise

Regular exercise helps prevent back pain and is a critical component of addressing and reducing back pain. Build a workout regimen that includes low-impact aerobic exercise, strength training, and flexibility. Exercise increases blood and nutrient flow to the spine and strengthens the back and chest muscles to support and stabilize the spine.

4. Target your core and trunk muscles with strengthening exercises

Strengthen your core and chest muscles to provide stability to the spine. A weak core can lead to too much spinal flexion (bending forward) or extension (bending backward) that can contribute to back pain.

5. Invest in an ergonomic workstation and office chair

Investing in an ergonomic office chair that provides proper back support can limit the stress on your back from long workdays at the office. Be sure to take breaks and move regularly throughout the workday. When seated, align your head, shoulders, and hips in a vertical line and sit up straight with your low back and shoulders against the back of the chair. Avoid crossing your legs, leaning to one side, tilting your head, or hunching your shoulders forward.



6. Reduce daily stressors on the back

Small daily stressors on the intricate structures of the back can add up and contribute to pain, such as the way you open a door or vacuum. When opening a door, stand straight and pull the handle vertical to your body rather than standing to the side and twisting your chest to open. When you vacuum, hold it in front of the body and use smaller arm movements, instead of standing to the side using one hand and twisting.

7. Reduce daily stressors on the back

If you have had a prolonged period of bending forward, such as weeding the garden, the spine's stability can be reduced and the joints of the back can temporarily stiffen. In this scenario, the back is at greater risk of a sudden injury if stress is exerted on the back right after the prolonged bending. After an episode of extended bending, stand upright for a period of time to allow the spinal tissues and joints to recover before placing any stress on the back through lifting or sudden movement.



8. Quit Smoking

Smoking accelerates the breakdown of the spine's discs and destroys the connective tissues that keep the spinal joints moving properly. Smoking reduces the blood supply to the discs, which can contribute to disc degeneration. Nicotine also increases the inflammatory response in the body, disrupting the body's ability to repair itself.

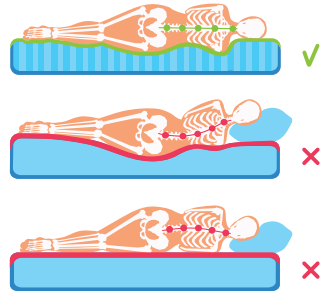


9. Maintain a healthy diet

A balanced nutritious diet is key to support spinal health and muscle, ligament, and tendon health and recovery. Eat whole foods, lean protein, and fruits and vegetables and stay sufficiently hydrated.

10. Rest and sleep in a back supportive position

If you are prone to back pain, maintaining a proper sleeping position can alleviate or minimise back pain. Sleep on your side with your knees pulled up slightly to the chest. Avoid sleeping on your stomach and if sleeping on your back, place a pillow under your knees and under the low back. Adequate rest is crucial for spine recovery.



Source:
<https://www.mangiarellirehabilitation.com/blog/10-tips-for-a-healthy-back>



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