

TOP 8 TIPS to keep your back in shape

Back pain is no laughing matter. In fact, nearly everyone in their lifetime will suffer from some type of back pain. As painful as it can be, the exact source of back pain is often difficult to identify or pinpoint, as there are numerous possible pain producers. Follow these guidelines to help protect against recurring back pain.



1

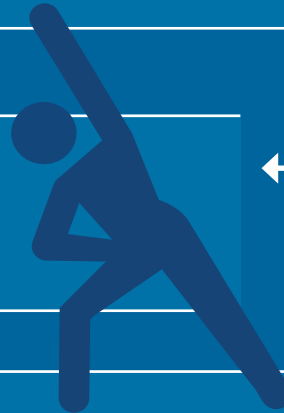
STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE

Do core strengthening exercises for your back and abdomen to support your lower back. Talk to your health care provider before beginning a new exercise program and ask for specific instructions regarding back exercises.

A regular program of walking or swimming builds endurance and core muscle strength. It may also help with weight management.

2

AEROBIC EXERCISE



3

STAND PROPERLY

Draw your shoulders back. Stand with your head level and aligned with your trunk. Keep your feet about a foot apart and your knees slightly relaxed. HELPFUL TIP: When standing for a prolonged time, try shifting your weight from foot to foot and from heels to toes.



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4

SITTING POSTURE

Ears and shoulders should be aligned over your hips, producing an inward curve in your lower back. **HELPFUL TIP:** Sit close enough to your desk or work space so you don't have to lean forward. Stand up, stretch and even take a short walk at least once per hour.

5

PROPER LIFTING & CARRYING

- ▶ Lift with your legs, not your back, keeping the object close to your body at all times. Do not bend from your waist.
- ▶ Pushing is easier on your back than pulling. Use your body weight to start the push. Avoid twisting motions when pushing or pulling items.
- ▶ If you must lift a heavy item, get someone to help you.



6

DON'T SMOKE

Smokers are more prone to back pain than non-smokers because nicotine and tobacco restrict the flow of blood to the discs that cushion your vertebrae.

7

WATCH YOUR WEIGHT

Weight control is important to maintaining a healthy back. Additional weight, especially in the stomach, puts additional strain on your spine and back muscles.

8

SLEEP TIGHT

If you sleep on your back, put a couple pillows under your knees. If you prefer side sleeping, place a pillow between your knees to maintain the natural curve of your back.