

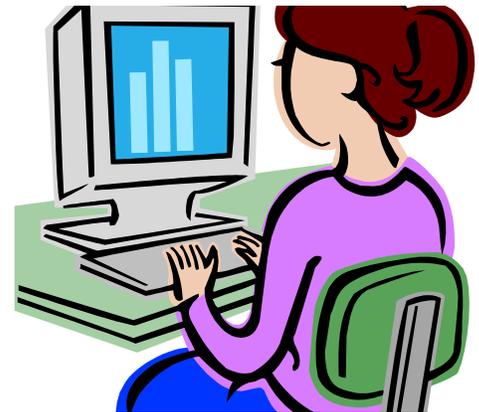
Your Back at Work

In the Office



Taking care of your spine at work

- Sitting for extended periods of time can stress your spine, including your back and neck, so changing positions every 30-60 minutes can be helpful. Try taking a short walk around the office, coupled with a good stretch!
- Make sure you position yourself comfortably with respect to your desk, keyboard, mouse and monitor.
- Use a supportive chair that you can adjust to suit your spine. A small cushion or rolled up towel in the hollow of your lower back can be supportive. If you cannot place your feet flat, use a footrest or even a small box.
- Avoid twisting your back or neck by placing papers and files as close to your monitor as possible. Document holders positioned next to your monitor can be helpful.
- Avoid holding telephones between your ear and shoulder. Instead, consider using an earpiece, headset or hands-free option.
- Use the World Spine Day “**Straighten Up and Move**” exercises to help combat poor posture and give your spine a break. try to change position at least once an hour!



Did you know?

- Back and neck pain is one of the most common reasons for workplace sick leave.
- Up to 80% of people will suffer from back or neck pain during their lives.
- 50% of the working population will experience back or neck pain symptoms at least once per year.
- Poor posture sitting at a desk can be as damaging as undertaking manual work— nearly 50% of display screen users report neck pain



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Your Back at Work

Sedentary Workers



General Tips for a Healthy Spine

- **Sleep-** sleeping on your back or stomach can put additional strain on your back and neck; when sleeping on your back place a pillow under your knees and when on your side place a pillow between your knees
- **Healthy Diet and Exercise-** extra body weight can cause additional strain on your spine; try to stay within 10lbs of your ideal weight by eating a healthy, well-balanced diet and exercising regularly
- **Stop Smoking-** smokers have more back pain because chemicals in tobacco can reduce circulation and delay healing
- **Straighten Up and Move-** become more aware of your posture, take regular breaks to change positions and try the “Straighten Up and Move” exercise series to reduce strain on your spine
- **Consult a registered health care professional-** discuss these and other strategies to prevent and manage spinal disorders; spine experts may include chiropractors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses and medical doctors

When to seek help:

It is important to seek help as soon as you notice that something seems changed or different. Experts can help you to identify the source of the problem and provide treatment and advice for prevention and management.

If you experience any of the following then you should consider seeking immediate attention:

- Loss of bowel/bladder function
- Pain accompanied by dizziness, double vision, difficulty speaking or swallowing, difficulty walking or nausea
- After a trauma such as an accident, slip/fall, motor vehicle accident
- Loss of coordination and or clumsiness in extremities
- Pain that is severe, constant, getting worse or does not improve
- Pain that is worse at night and/or accompanied by night sweats
- Pain/numbness/tingling that goes into the arm or down the leg