

Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter
July 2012—Back Health



06/28/2012—Jo Anne Longoria winner of Door Prize #1 at our Health & Wellness Seminar hosted by South Texas Vein Inst.

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Be Kind To Your Spine

At one time or another, eight out of 10 Americans will be incapacitated with back pain, unable to work or enjoy life. Back pain is ranked second only to headaches as the most frequent cause of pain. Learn the right moves:

Reaching for supplies, especially in high places, can strain your back. Remember to:

- Reach only as high as your shoulders
- Use a stool or stepladder if you need to get closer to the load

Lifting is one of the most common causes of back injuries. Remember to:

- Keep your head up
- Get a firm footing and assume a wide stance with your hips above knee level
- Tighten your abdominal muscles to support your back
- Lift with your legs
- Keep the load close to your body

These tips are intended as general information only. Please consult your physician for specific advice. Visit Blue Access® for Members at www.bcbstx.com for more information about back pain.

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Stretch Break....

Is work causing a pain in your neck? If so, maybe it's time to take a stretch break. Sitting at your desk all day can put pressure on your lower back, neck and shoulders, leaving you sore and exhausted by the end of the day. Take one-minute breaks about every 20 minutes to help relieve tension and loosen your muscles. Stretch your arms, shoulders and back muscles.

Source: Mayo Clinic Online Resources

Put Your Best Foot Forward

How to protect your back when lifting

Occupations such as construction, factory work or other physical types of jobs can place significant demands on your back. Exerting too much force on your back may cause injury. If your job is physical in nature, you might face injury if you frequently lift or move heavy objects. The good news is that you can avoid back pain and injuries by paying attention to what causes them and focusing on prevention. Here are safeguards to keep in mind when you lift:

Start in the best position

Think through your task first, before lifting. Decide where you'll place the load and how you'll get there. Remember not to bend your waist or lock your legs. Instead, plant your feet firmly on the ground, standing as close to the load as possible. Kneel down, resting one knee on the ground. Lift the object from between your legs and hold it close to your body.

Have a leg to stand on

Your leg muscles are some of the strongest muscles in your body—use them to lift the load. Keep your back as straight as possible and tighten your abdominal muscles to help support your spine.

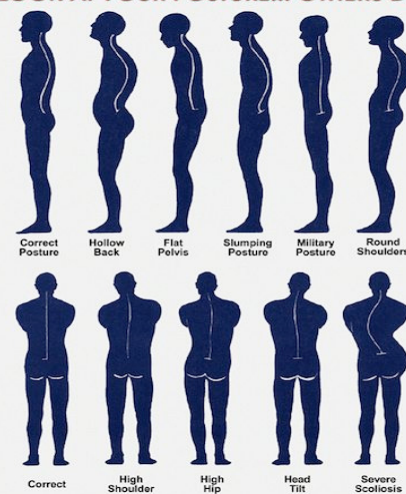
Keep the load close at hand

When you are standing and ready to move, hold the load close to your body. This will reduce the strain on your lower back. Avoid turning or twisting while holding the load. Turn by pivoting your feet, not your back. Also, avoid lifting heavy loads above your waist.

Always ask for help if an object is too heavy and use equipment or tools to assist when available. And next time you get ready to pick up a load, give your back the lift it deserves with these practical, back-saving ideas.

Sources: 1998-2006 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research; National Institutes of Health

LOOK AT YOUR POSTURE... OTHERS DO

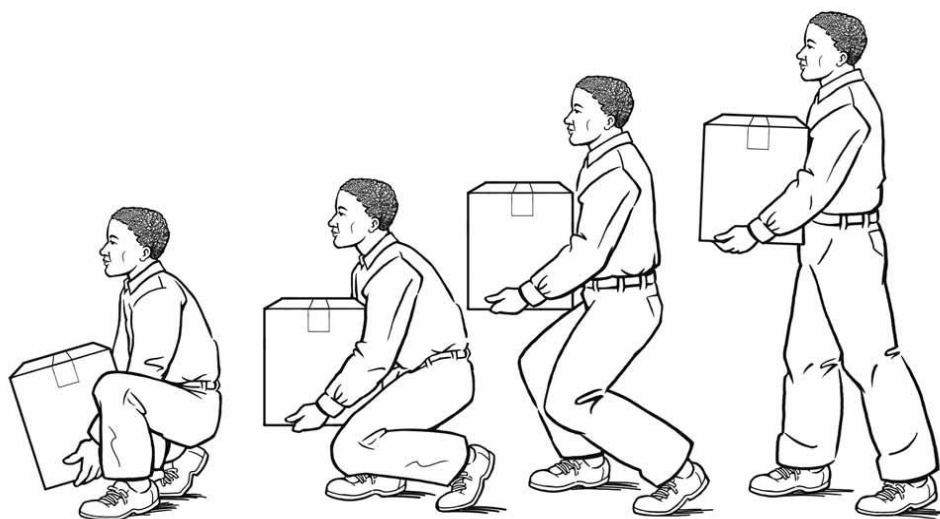


Stay Ahead of the Curve for a Healthy Back

Your back is formed with three natural curves in an S-shape. When these curves are aligned properly, your ears, shoulders and hips are in a straight line. Without support from strong, flexible muscles, your back loses its three natural curves. Poor posture can lead to pain and serious injury.

Aerobic exercise, combined with healthy eating and maintaining your ideal weight, can help build the muscles that support your back and eliminate any unnecessary strain. Think about making some new lifestyle choices today to help maintain your curves for a healthier, pain-free back.

Sources: 1998-2006 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research; National Institutes of Health



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Exercise at your desk



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Stretch Yourself

Make stretching at your desk a daily habit

Feeling the aches and pains of spending too many hours tackling the pile of work on your desk or leaning forward hunched over the keyboard? Sitting at a desk all day puts pressure on your lower back, neck and shoulders. When the day is over, you may feel the effects with symptoms like soreness or exhaustion.

Fortunately, proper stretching is something you can do to give your muscles and tendons the rest, recovery and nutrients they need for health and injury prevention. Even if you have a comfy, well-adjusted chair, it's still necessary to stretch and change positions because your body is designed to move.

Relieve common aches and pains by taking one-minute breaks every 20 minutes or so to relieve tension and loosen stiff muscles. Make sure to stretch your arm, shoulder and back muscles. Here are a few helpful stretches to get you started:

Finger stretch

Separate and straighten your fingers until you feel a stretch, keeping your hand in alignment with your wrist. Hold for 10 seconds. Next, bend the end and middle knuckles of your fingers, keeping your hand and wrist in the same position. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax and repeat.

Back scratch

Give yourself a pat on the back, and gently stretch the back of your arm at the same time. Reach behind your head and place your hand on your upper back, keeping your arm close to your ear. Gently hold your elbow with your opposite hand. Pull your elbow toward the back of your head and reach your hand toward the middle of your back until you feel a gentle stretch. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds. Relax. Repeat on the other side.

Chin tuck

Start by facing straight ahead. Keep your back straight, and pull your chin toward your chest until you feel a stretch along the back of your neck. Hold for five to 10 seconds. Relax and return to your starting position. Repeat two to three times.

Shoulder shrug

Slowly bring your shoulders up toward your ears. Hold for three to five seconds, then roll your shoulders back and down. Relax. Repeat five to 10 times.

Daily stretching can help you feel better, boost your energy level and reduce the pain caused by prolonged sitting at your desk. For more great stretching exercises, take a stretch break today and log on to Blue Access for Members at www.bcbstx.com.

Source: 1998-2006 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

Warm up to stretching to prevent injury

If you really want to make your muscles hustle, then incorporate stretching into your exercise routine. How much should you stretch? As a general rule, stretch whenever you exercise. If you don't exercise regularly, you might want to stretch at least three times a week to maintain flexibility. If you have a problem area, such as tightness in the back of your leg, you might want to stretch every day or even twice a day.

You can stretch anytime, anywhere — in your home, at work or when you're traveling. If you have a chronic condition or an injury, however, you may need to alter your approach to stretching. For example, if you have a strained muscle, stretching it like usual may cause further harm. Discuss with your doctor or a physical therapist the best way to stretch.

Give your fingers a stretch by visiting the Personal Health Manager available through Blue Access® for Members at www.bcbstx.com. You'll find resources to muscle up your fitness program, like *Ask A Trainer* for one-on-one advice with quick, helpful feedback about your fitness goals.

Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research



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06/28/12—Luis Mendoza winner of door prize #2 at our Health & Wellness Seminar hosted by: South Texas Vein Institute.

July Health & Wellness Seminar:

Topic: Back Health

Date: July 26, 2012

Time: 2:30—3:30 pm

Speaker : To be announced

Location: City Hall—Council Chambers

Look for Health & Wellness Seminar flyer for more information.

Chicken Salad

6 servings

Ingredients

- 2 (12.5 oz) cans salt-free white meat chicken packed in water, drained
- 1/2 cup celery, diced
- 1 (8 oz) can of water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 1/2 cup onion, diced (purple or white)
- 1 cup seedless grapes, halved, or 1/2 cup raisins or dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup of unsalted, unroasted walnut/pecans, chopped

1. Toss all together with dressing.

Dressing

- 1/2 cup light mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup fat free sour cream
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

1. Combine all in small bowl, mix well.

Serving suggestion: scoop the seeds out of a tomato or bell pepper and serve a scoop of chicken salad inside or serve over a piece of whole wheat toast or a plate of mixed greens or baby spinach.

Upcoming Monthly Health

Wellness Seminars:

August 2012—Immunization

Awareness

September 2012—Cholesterol

October 2012—Breast/Prostate

Cancer Awareness

November 2012—Diabetes

December 2012—Alcohol/Drug Abuse

(All topics subject to change)

*If you have a subject or topic that you would like more information on, feel free to make your requests at 956-580-8630.

Wellness Scramble

Unscramble the letters of these words. Look for the answer next month.

roptlec oury kins

June's scramble:

Stay injury free

Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health awareness and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Human Resources Department

1201 E. 8th Street

Mission, TX 78572

956-580-8631

Noemi Munguia—Human Resources Director

Romie Palomo—Benefits Coordinator

Elena Perez—Personnel Manager

Vicky Ortiz—Insurance Benefits Specialist

