



# Looking after your **SPINE** AT WORK

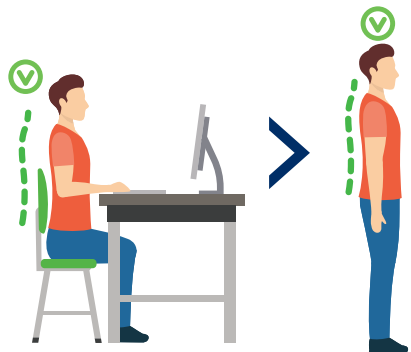
Back strain or pain is one of the most common niggles for office workers, because we spend so much time sitting and few of us maintain good posture. The good news is that there are simple ways to sort out that stiff lower back.

## Common causes of back pain

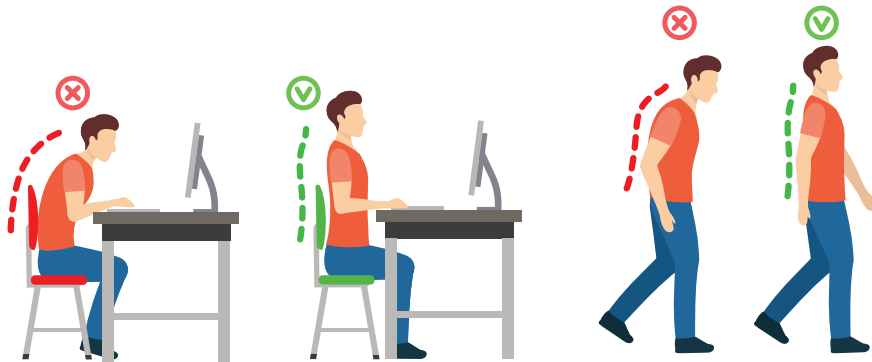
- Bad posture
- Inactivity
- Lifting heavy objects incorrectly
- Smoking
- Being overweight
- Sleeping position

## How to take proper care of your spine

- **Strengthen your core muscles** to support your spine properly. Do this simple exercise: Push your chair away from the desk and then stand up and sit down repeatedly without using your arms to push you up. This requires that you engage your core muscles. Do this a few times a day – it has the added benefit of forcing you to take a short break and stimulates your blood circulation.



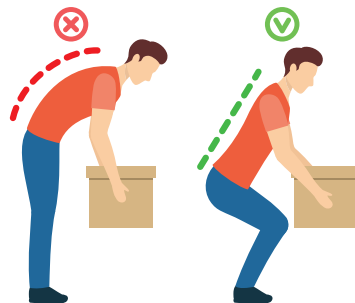
- **Stretch more.** Create a daily habit of stretching regularly during the day.
- **Maintain good posture** when you sit, stand and walk. Keeping the spine straight will remove unnecessary pressure from the discs and engage your core muscles to support the spine.



- **Move.** Get up from your desk a few times a day, walk around the office and climb a few flights of stairs.

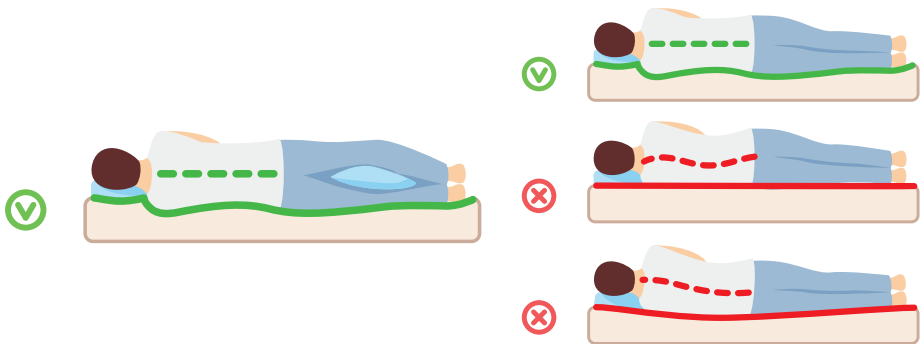
- **Lift heavy objects correctly.**

Bend your knees when you lift something heavy and ask for help if something is too heavy to pick up by yourself. If you use force, your spine will twist the wrong way and injure muscles or, even worse, a disk in your spine.



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- **Sleeping positions matter.** If you sleep on your back it can put unnecessary pressure on your spine. You can counter this effect by placing a pillow under your knees to elevate your legs slightly. Try to sleep on your side at times and use a pillow between your knees to relieve strain on your back muscles.



- **Watch your weight.**

- **Quite smoking.** Smoking restricts blood flow to the discs that cushion the vertebrae in your spine. This can cause disc degeneration. Smoking also inhibits calcium absorption in your bones and impairs new bone growth.

- **Consider supplements.** Vitamin D and calcium help to build healthy bones. Remember to always ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before adding supplements to your diet.



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