

# Back in business

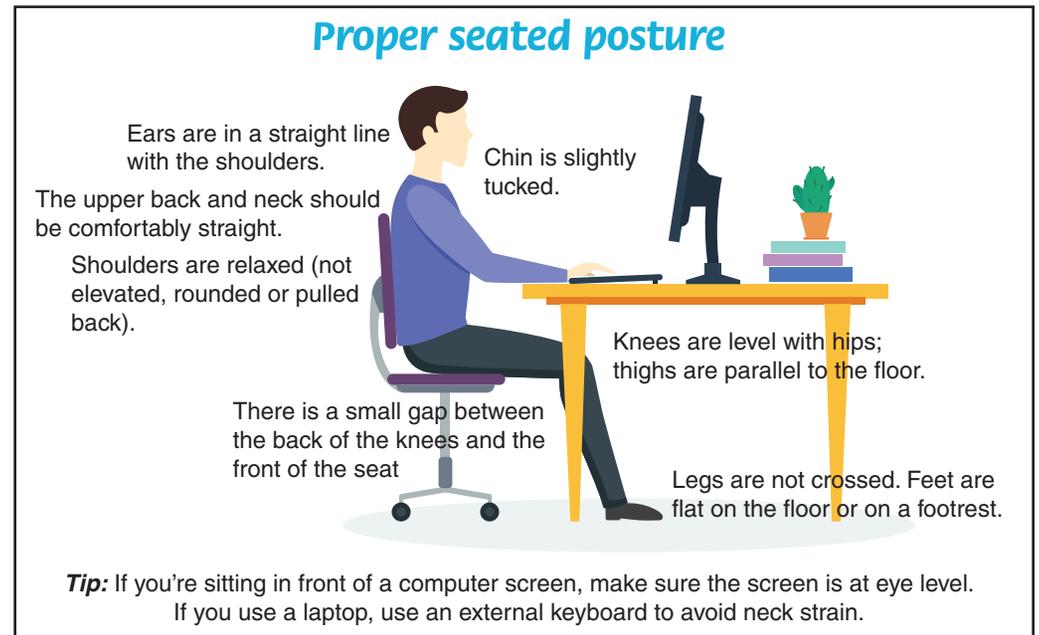
## 6 questions that can help prevent back pain at work



Your Health and Wellness Awareness Program

No one wants to end the day with sore muscles and an aching back, but you can take steps to prevent an end-of-day ache. To help ward off back pain, try asking yourself these questions:

1. **Do I make it a point to move during the day?** Getting up and stretching every 30 minutes to an hour gives some muscles a chance to work, while others have the opportunity for a break. Take a brief walk or try some gentle stretches to relieve tension.
2. **Am I being smart about lifting?** Before you lift a heavy load, see if there is a lifting device that could be used instead. When you need to haul a heavy briefcase or bag, consider using a small rolling suitcase or backpack. If you need to lift or carry a heavy object, make sure you use the proper technique by squatting down near the object, keeping the load near your body, and lifting with your legs.
3. **Am I wearing the right shoes?** High heels are a common back pain culprit, as they put extra stress on the lower back. Shoes that are too flat can be problematic as well, as they lack proper arch support. When choosing footwear, look for a pair with proper arch support that doesn't throw your back out of alignment.
4. **Am I making lifestyle choices that support a healthy back?** Carrying less body weight reduces the amount of stress on your back. To get to or maintain a healthy weight, choose a low-fat diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. In addition, make sure to get enough calcium and Vitamin D. These nutrients help prevent osteoporosis, which causes the bones to become weak and brittle. Also make exercise part of your routine. This not only helps keep weight under control, it strengthens the muscles supporting your back.
5. **Is my cell phone affecting my posture?** Keeping a cell phone, or a wallet, in your back pocket can put pressure on your lower back. Store them elsewhere when you're seated.
6. **Am I slouching?** When you're engrossed in a project, you may not realize that you're slouching or hunched over at your desk. The pain may not appear at first, but over time poor posture can lead to an aching back. Take a moment to consider whether your posture follows the guidelines in the graphic. Also, make sure your chair, keyboard, and monitor are aligned properly. When typing, the wrists should be straight and the hands at or below elbow level.



# Online Resources



## **Reducing Occupational Sitting Time and Improving Worker Health**

This report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes how the Take-a-Stand project helped participants move more and reduce upper back and neck pain.

[https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2012/11\\_0323.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2012/11_0323.htm)

## **Low Back Pain Fact Sheet**

This website from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke provides information about diagnosis and treatment of back pain.

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Low-Back-Pain-Fact-Sheet>

## **Back Pain Information Page**

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke provides information about back pain research on this website.

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Back-Pain-Information-Page>