

## **Tips for Daily Movement and Inactivity**

The way a person moves, stands, or sleeps plays a major role in back pain.

- Maintaining good posture is very important. This means keeping the ears, shoulders, and hips in a straight line with the head up and stomach pulled in. It is best not to stand for long periods of time. If it is necessary, walk as much as possible and wear shoes without heels, preferably with cushioned soles. Use a low foot stool and alternate resting each foot on top of it.
- Sitting puts the most pressure on the back. Chairs should either have straight backs or low-back support. If possible, chairs should swivel to avoid twisting at the waist, have arm rests, and adjustable backs. While sitting, the knees should be a little higher than the hip, so a low stool or hassock is useful to put the feet on. A small pillow or rolled towel behind the lower back helps relieve pressure while either sitting or driving.
- Riding in or driving a car for long periods of time increases stress. Move the car seat forward to avoid bending forward. The back of the seat should not be reclined more than 30 degrees. If possible, the seat bottom should be tilted slightly upward in front. A traveler should stop and walk around about every hour. Avoid lifting or carrying objects immediately after the ride.
- A common cause of temporary back pain in children is carrying backpacks that are too heavy. Backpacks should not weigh more than 20% of the child's body weight. They should weigh even less for very young children. Emotional or behavioral problems may also contribute to back pain in children.

Reviewed By: Harvey Simon, MD, Editor-in-Chief, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Physician, Massachusetts General Hospital. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, A.D.A.M., Inc.

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