

## Watch Your Back

Good posture is key to preventing back pain. The back is the supporting structure for the rest of the body and we often take it for granted. By thinking about how we sit, stand and lie down we can help to avoid “stressing” our back and creating pain.

### The ideal standard

In a perfect world we would all stand up straight – we would be able to draw a line from our ear, through our shoulder, hip, knee and ankle. However it is important to stand in a relaxed way. And when sitting the same applies – the invisible line should go from ear through shoulder to hip.

### Keep moving

Lack of exercise can contribute to back pain. Regular exercise is essential – the fitter you are, the less likely you are to injure yourself.

Don't sit for prolonged periods.

If you are new to exercise, then be sensible. Work with your body to avoid injury and pain.

Remember to warm up and cool down! Often overlooked by many keen exercisers – it is essential that muscles and joints are warmed up before exercising and cooled down at the end.

Remember to focus on your core muscles. Strong abdominal muscles can help to prevent a bad back

If you have to be stationary for any period of time, then do some simple stretches and shoulder shrugs – these can all help to relax your posture and keep your back in line.

### Watching TV

A time that we all like to relax – may be a little too much! Try to avoid ‘slouching’ and allow the chair to take your weight so that your whole body is supported.

Try to sit up straight – remembering the invisible line from ear, to shoulder and hip.

### At the Computer

Sit comfortably – ensure your screen is at the right height and so that you are not straining your neck. Try to have your spine supported and let your chair take your weight.

Don't spend too long at your desk – move about in your chair and every 40 minutes or so get up and walk around. It is good for your spine, and your brain!

If possible have your arms supported when using your computer keyboard and mouse.

### In the Car

Relax! This not only reduces the pressure on the spine but will probably make the journey more enjoyable.

Make sure you're seat is the correct distance from the wheel and sit as far back in the car seat as possible so that it can support you properly.

### On your Feet

Good footwear is key to good posture. They should support your feet in a way that is comfortable for you. They should also provide good grip – to avoid any unwanted slips and slides.

### Carrying

Whenever possible carry using a rucksack and use both of the straps over your shoulders. If you use a single strap bag – then place the strap on one shoulder and the bag at the opposite hip to avoid putting strain on one side of the body. And remember to switch shoulders every now and again!

### A Good Night's Sleep

Relax – adopt a sleeping position where your whole body is supported by your bed. Try not to twist your neck so lay on your side or your back.

When you awake enjoy some simple stretches before getting out of bed to start to mobilise your muscles gently at the start of the day.