



3320 WAKE FOREST RD.
SUITE 430
RALEIGH, NC 27609
919.876.7676
919.876.7163 FAX
www.trianglaspine.com

Low Back Pain Prevention Tips

The following tips may be helpful in preventing low back pain associated with strain and sprain:

- Do crunches and other abdominal-muscle strengthening exercises to provide more spine stability. Swimming, stationary bicycling and brisk walking are good aerobic exercises that generally do not put extra stress on your back.
- Use correct lifting and moving techniques, such as squatting to lift a heavy object. Don't bend and lift. Get help if an object is too heavy or awkward. Don't lift by bending over. Lift an object by bending your hips and knees and then squatting to pick up the object. Keep your back straight and hold the object close to your body. Avoid twisting your body while lifting.
- Push rather than pull when you must move heavy objects.
- Wear flat shoes or shoes with low heels (1 inch or lower).
- Exercise regularly. An inactive lifestyle contributes to lower back pain.
- Maintain correct posture when you're sitting. Sit in chairs with straight backs or low-back support. Keep your knees a little higher than your hips. Adjust the seat or use a low stool to prop your feet on. Turn by moving your whole body rather than by twisting at your waist.
- Maintain correct posture while standing. If you must stand for long periods, rest 1 foot on a low stool to relieve pressure on your lower back. Every 5 to 15 minutes, switch the foot you're resting on the stool. Maintain good posture: Keep your ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line, with your head up and your stomach pulled in.
- The best way to sleep is on your side with your knees bent. You may put a pillow under your head to support your neck. You may also put a pillow between your knees. If you sleep on your back, put pillows under your knees and a small pillow under your lower back. Don't sleep on your stomach unless you put a pillow under your hips. Use a firm mattress. If

your mattress is too soft, use a board of 1/2-inch plywood under the mattress to add support.

- **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking is a risk factor for atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), which can cause lower back pain and degenerative disc disorders.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra weight, especially around the midsection, can put strain on your lower back.

Treatment:

Treatment of ongoing back problems must be directed at the cause. This may mean losing weight (because being overweight can make back pain worse), getting your muscles in better shape, and improving your posture when you're sitting, standing and sleeping.

What exercises can I do to strengthen my back?

Some specific exercises can help your back. One is to gently stretch your back muscles. Lie on your back with your knees bent and slowly raise your left knee to your chest. Press your lower back against the floor. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat the exercise with your right knee. Do 10 of these exercises for each leg, switching legs.

- While some exercises are specific for your back, it's also important to stay active in general. Swimming and walking are good overall exercises to improve your fitness.

Sources: <http://familydoctor.org/117.xml>

<http://www.tsjh.org/patient-education/spine-cervical-fusion.html>

<http://www.spineuniversity.com/public/spineschool.asp>