



SHAPE
SAFETY & HEALTH IN ARTS
PRODUCTION & ENTERTAINMENT

A guide to preventing low back pain

Back Facts

- Back pain does not necessarily mean that you have a back injury. Most back pain comes from the muscles, ligaments, and joints in the back when they are not moving the way they should.
- 80% of North Americans will have back pain at some time in their lives.
- Many different factors can work together to cause back pain.
- Muscle tension can cause spasms resulting in pain.
- Smokers and people with previous back pain are more likely to get back pain.

Back Posture

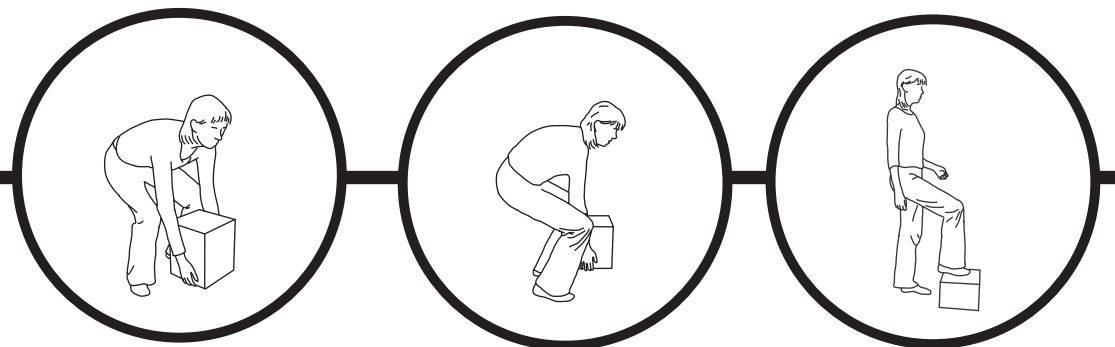
Your spine is one of the strongest parts of your body. It is strongest in its natural curves. When you put your back in a position that does not follow the natural curves, the back has to work harder to do the same job. Poor posture fatigues the muscles faster and, over time, can produce back pain.

Avoid these back postures:



Back pain is caused by many factors. When two or more risk factors are present at the same time, you are at a much higher risk of injury. The most common poor postures used when handling objects are forward bending, twisting, and extreme side bending.

A few back safe tips:



- When lifting loads, use a two-handed grip where practical and maintain a straight back with your head up, bringing the load as close to the body as possible.
- When repetitively handling objects, turn your body by moving your feet and getting into a stable position.
- When you need to do the same task for a long period of time, try to change your posture as often as possible. It is also helpful to place one foot on a box, or similar type object, to take some pressure of the lower back.

Exercises

People who are physically fit generally get less back pain and recover faster from back injuries.

A little exercise every day can make a huge difference. The following are some exercises often recommended to enhance fitness. Consult your health professional for exercises that are suitable for you.



back extension

hamstring stretch

side bend

knee to chest stretch

partial sit-up

Tips for Preventing Back Pain

- When lifting, keep the object as close to you as possible. Balance the load you are carrying between both hands. Minimize the distance you reach when picking up an object.
- Stretch to keep your lower back and legs flexible.
- Keep your abdominal muscles strong.
- Your back is designed for movement. Don't stay in a poor or awkward position for extended periods. Don't sit or stand for extended periods without changing your posture. When you start to feel fatigued, it is an indication that you have been in that position for too long.
- Exercise and get moving. Low impact aerobic exercising, such as biking, walking or swimming, can help prevent recurrences of low back pain.
- Throughout the day, pay attention to keeping your natural back curves.
- Wear comfortable, well supported shoes.
- Sleep on a firm mattress.
- If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your knees.