



Daily Care For A Healthy Back

It is very important to learn how to perform ordinary movements so that you don't strain your back. The following are some suggestions:

- Never bend from the waist only. Lower your upper body by bending from your knees and hips. Tennis players would be wise to pick up balls by lifting them between a foot and the racquet.
- To lift a heavy object, bend from the knees to reach it, hold it close to your body and then stand up by straightening your knees. Do not try to lift heavy loads above your waist.
- Balance the weight of what you carry between both hands or shoulders. Never try to carry more weight than you can easily manage. Use a dolly or luggage cart to carry heavy bags.
- Avoid sitting on soft chairs and deep couches. Sit with a firm support for your back and with your knees higher than your hips; if necessary, put something under your feet to raise them.
- If you must do jobs that involve prolonged standing, place a footrest under one foot. This will help to straighten your back and reduce strain on lower back muscles. If you must stand somewhere where you cannot raise one foot, periodically do a standing pelvic tilt: tighten your abdominal and buttocks muscles to reduce the curve in your lower back.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach. Sleep on your back with a soft pillow under your head and with two pillows or a blanket roll under your knees, or sleep on your side with knees bent in a fetal position.
- Wear flat shoes or shoes with moderate heels. Women should avoid heels higher than one and a half inches and should especially avoid repeatedly switching from high to low heels.
- Avoid other activities that strain the back, such as raising and lowering stuck windows, opening very heavy doors, moving or lifting heavy furniture, lifting shovelfuls of heavy snow, pushing vehicles or pulling heavy carts. For example, a shopping cart with four wheels that can be pushed in front of you is likely to cause less of a strain on your back.
- Learn to move deliberately; avoid sudden movements that overload the muscles. Avoid unnecessary twists and turns.

Berkeley Heights Chiropractic Center's Back School covers this and much more in great detail. If you have questions concerning this information or the Back School, please call us at 905-665-0770.