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Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at PSW Benefit Resources and Insurance Services

# Good Posture for Spine Health

## *Simple solutions to reduce back and neck pain*

Maintaining good posture is a simple yet effective way to keep the structures in the back and spine in good working order. In fact, good posture and back support are essential in reducing back and neck pain. Even sitting at a desk all day can wreak havoc on the back and neck, and result in painful strains.

### **Good Posture**

The Cleveland Clinic Department of Patient Education and Health Information defines posture as the position when one holds his/her body upright against gravity. Good posture involves training the body to stand, walk, sit and lie in ways to place the least amount of strain on muscles and ligaments.

There are many physical benefits to having good posture, such as:

- Keeping your bones and joints in the correct alignment to ensure that muscles work properly
- Decreasing abnormal wear on joint surfaces (may result in arthritis)
- Decreasing the stress on ligaments which hold the spine together
- Preventing the spine from fixing in an abnormal position
- Lessening fatigue
- Preventing strains, backaches and muscular pain

### **Contributions to Bad Posture**

Though it is not a conscious decision most of the time, many workers have bad posture which can result in injuries. Here are some common behaviors that contribute to bad posture:

- Shoulders hunched forward while slouching
- Forming a “swayback” (also known as lordosis) in which there is an inward curve in the lower back
- Carrying a heavy load on one side of the body
- Cradling a phone receiver between the neck and shoulder
- Wearing high-heeled shoes without arch support or clothes that are too tight
- Excessively looking up or down
- Slumping or sliding in a forward position in a desk chair

### **Helpful Solutions**

Want to ease strains and prevent back and neck injuries? Here are some recommendations for standing, sitting and lying down:

#### *Standing Properly:*

- ✓ Put your chin in and keep your head up
- ✓ Keep your earlobes in line with the middle of your shoulders
- ✓ Keep shoulder blades back and chest forward
- ✓ Keep your knees straight and

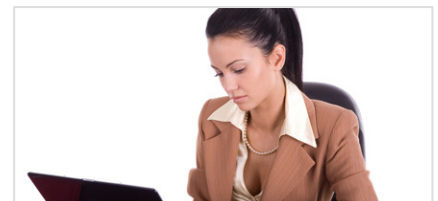
- ✓ tuck in your stomach
- ✓ Extend your head towards the ceiling

#### *Sitting Properly:*

- ✓ Place your shoulders back and your back straight
- ✓ Evenly distribute your body weight on both hips
- ✓ Bend your knees at a right angle and keep your feet rested flat on the floor
- ✓ Adjust chair height to sit close to your workstation
- ✓ Do not twist at the waist to grab something, turn your entire body
- ✓ Avoid sitting in the same position for more than 30 minutes

#### *Lying Down Properly:*

- ✓ Lie in such a way to maintain the curve in your back such as on your back with a pillow under your knees
- ✓ Place a lumbar pillow under your lower back or on your side with the knees bent
- ✓ Sleep on a firm mattress with a box spring that does not sag



## **Did You Know...?**

Not maintaining good posture can place strain on your muscles over time and can eventually change your anatomical characteristics. This can lead to constricted blood vessels and nerves, problems with muscles, discs and joints, headaches, fatigue and breathing problems.