


THE GOLDSBORO SPINE CENTER

An organization of Chiropractic Physicians and staff
Dedicated to conservative and cooperative spinecare

30 TIPS FOR BETTER SPINE HEALTH

- 1. Exercise Regularly:** Spinal tissue repair and remodeling is influenced by the stresses placed upon them. Regular exercise and strengthening activities will promote a healthier, stronger and more stable spine. Exercise does not have to be overly strenuous to achieve significant benefits. A regular activity such as a daily walk can make a huge difference. Start an exercise program slowly to give your muscles a chance to warm up and loosen. Check with your doctor prior to engaging in an exercise program. Increased abdominal strength will help protect the spine from injury as it supports the spine from in front just as the muscle of the back support the spine from behind.
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- 2. Eat Healthy:** Proper nutrition will support spine development and repair. A proper diet will also help to strengthen spinal tissues thus reducing the risk for injury.
 - 3. Maintain Good Posture:** Assume efficient and supportive postures while lying, sitting, and standing to reduce strain on spinal tissues, to reduce the risk for spine injury and to promote spine health.
 - 4. Invest in a Good Pillow and Mattress:** The average individual spends approximately one third of life sleeping, therefore; proper support of the spine and head during this period will strongly influence spine health. A good pillow and mattress will also facilitate more restorative sleep. In some instances an individual may benefit by the use of more than one pillow. There are different types of pillows. When you sleep you do not have conscious control over your body position. A good mattress will support the spine no matter how many times one moves during the night.
 - 5. Maintain Spine Flexibility:** Regular activity and stretching helps maintain flexibility of the spine; flexibility which is required to reduce the risk of injury.
 - 6. Balanced Carrying:** Always attempt to carry items over 10 pounds in a balanced fashion, dispersing the weight as evenly as possible from right to left. Do not overload your luggage, backpack or purse.
 - 7. Take Periodic Breaks:** Avoid sustained postures. During episodes of prolonged sitting or standing, periodically take a break, stretch your legs and back. Periodic stretching will help to keep you from tightening up and injuring the spine.

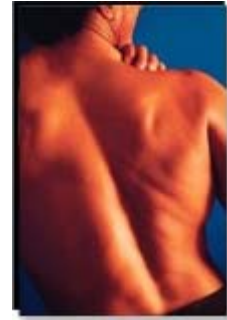
8. **Use Proper Phone Technique and Equipment:** Avoid cradling the phone between the neck and the shoulder. Use a headset if prolonged phone use is required at home or at work which will allow you to maintain a neutral head and neck position.
9. **Sleep on Your Back or Side:** These positions are generally more supportive of the spine than lying face down.
10. **Good Sleep Support:** Sleeping on a supportive mattress. Do not sleep on your stomach. If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your knees to reduce rotation of the low back. If you sleep on your side, try to keep your legs bent at the knees and at the hips, a position which reduces the stress on the low back.
11. **Invest in Proper Shoes and Footwear:** The average person takes approximately 5,000 – 8,000 steps during the course of a normal day. Proper foot and ankle support will reduce stress upon the knees and hips as well as the back.
12. **Invest in Good Chairs:** Individuals spend the majority of their lives in a sitting position. Chairs greatly influence sitting posture. Poor chairs contribute to chronic spine problems; well- designed chairs promote spine health.
13. **Have Regular Spinal Check-Ups at the Goldsboro Spine Center:** It's much easier to prevent a problem than to correct one.
14. **Use Proper Lifting Techniques:** Proper lifting technique will reduce the risk for spine injury. Keep the back straight and bend the legs and hips when lifting; this reduces stress on the back. Avoid lifting objects higher than your waist whenever possible. Face the object you wish to lift. When lifting hold the objects close to the body. Do not twist while lifting. When possible push rather than pull an object which is easier on the back. Seek help lifting when necessary. Lift cautiously with moderate speed.
15. **Walk Efficiently:** Walking requires the use of over 200 individual muscles. It requires the use of all muscles of the spine and pelvis. Walk erect with your head and neck in a neutral position. Avoiding slumping while walking. Avoid high heels and platform shoes. Avoid or reduce excessive back extension (swayback) during walking.
16. **Do Not Overwork:** When possible modify postures and physical activity to reduce the risk of muscle fatigue and back strain.
17. **Avoid Excessive High-Impact Activities:** Each time you strike your foot during walking, running or jumping, the shock of impact is absorbed by the joints of the feet, ankles, legs, hips and low back. Avoid excessive high impact activities (see above). Wear proper footwear to reduce the degree of shock to the spine.
18. **Think Ergonomically:** Seek the optimum work environment. This requires an adjustable workstation to properly support the extremities and the spine. An

efficient work environment will include proper phone equipment, an adjustable chair, an efficient keyboard and adjustable monitor. The work surface should have adjustable height. It will also require proper lighting. A footrest will contribute to reduced stress on the spine. Assume a relaxed yet supported posture.

19. **Use Products that Promote Good Posture and Spine Health:**

Utilize products which support the spine from the ground up. Use support-enhancing products that can be added to poorly designed furniture and seating.

20. **Listen to Your Back:** Avoid positions and activities which contribute to increased back pain or cause back pain radiating down the legs. Avoid those positions which elicit numbness or tingling. If back symptoms should persist or progress, see a spine physician. If you are involved in an activity that causes or increases back pain, think about what you can change to alleviate the pain. Your body will usually tell you what it needs if you take time to listen to it.



21. **Maintain Optimum Body Weight.** Excessive bodyweight increases stress upon the tissues of the spine, thereby increasing the risk for abnormal “wear and tear”. Excessive body weight also contributes to alteration of the normal curves of the spine which can lead to stress on the spine.

22. **Avoid Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk for many life threatening conditions. Smoking is a habit which promotes tissue inflammation and impairs the healing process. Smoking contributes to blood vessel disease which can impair blood flow to many parts of the body including the back.

23. **Get a Spinecare**

Education: Whenever possible learn more about your spine and how to take care of it. Seek insight from a spine physician. Go to Goldsboro Spine Center for valuable information which is continuously updated.



24. **Drink Water:** An adequate amount of water is vital to good health. The musculoskeletal tissues require water to function and to repair them selves.

25. **Get Enough Sleep:** Sleep is essential to good health, mental alertness, tissue growth and repair. An adequate amount of **restful sleep** is required to restore the body. This is related to the amount of time spent sleeping and the quality of sleep. Back pain is the most common form of nighttime pain. Many individuals with back pain suffer from fragmented sleep and wake up feeling unrefreshed.

26. **Be Sure to Have Your Child’s Spine Checked Regularly:** At the Goldsboro Spine Center we know that early detection of abnormal curvatures in

your spine is the best prevention. Many children have scoliosis and it goes undetected. This serious condition often results in neck pain, back pain, headaches, early arthritis and early spinal degeneration. Remember spinal conditions are often hereditary and if you suffer from back pain, neck pain, or headaches, have your child's spine checked then they may not have to suffer from the same problems that you do.

27. **Support the Abdomen During Pregnancy:** A protuberant abdomen during pregnancy increases the forward curvature of the low back. This increases strain on the discs and joints of the low back. In pregnancy a brace, which supports the pelvis and abdomen, will reduce strain on the low back. The use of a brace should be discussed with an obstetrician and/or spine physician. Such a brace should be fitted by a healthcare professional at the Goldsboro Spine Center.
28. **Frequently Visit Your Spine Doctor During Pregnancy:** A women's body should be functioning at its best before and during the pregnancy. At the Goldsboro Spine Center the Doctors are trained in techniques that are designed to reduce the stress on the mother's body. This will make the pregnancy and delivery much easier and often much quicker.
29. **Frequently Adjust Your Posture:** Alternate between sitting and standing tasks to reduce stress placed upon the spine. Have your spine adjusted by a professional spine doctor at the Goldsboro Spine Center to help maintain positive spinal posture.
30. **Learn to Relax:** Learn and apply relaxation techniques to manage stress both on the job and off the job. This will help to reduce muscle tension and pain from those muscles.

**IF BACK OR NECK SYMPTOMS PERSIST OR PROGRESS,
SEE A SPINE PHYSICIAN, AT THE
GOLDSBORO SPINE CENTER**