



back care

TIPS FOR DAILY ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

When your back hurts, the way you hold and move your body is important. Your muscles can become more tense and painful depending upon your body position. When you change the way you stand or move your body you can help reduce your pain.

This booklet will help you pay attention to your posture and reduce the pain you are feeling. Good posture means holding your back in a position that maintains your natural curve. Practicing good posture and thinking about how you move when doing any activity will help reduce your pain.

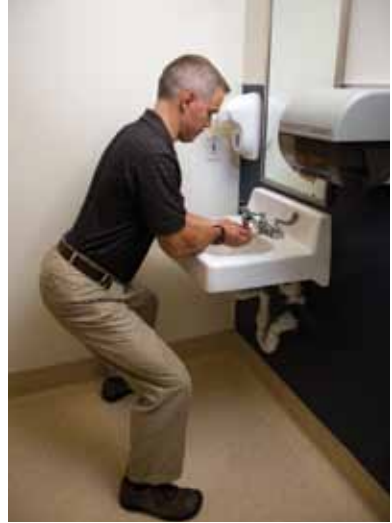
The following pages provide tips for:

- washing your face and brushing your teeth
- getting out of bed and into bed
- moving from sitting to standing
- squatting
- half kneeling
- using a "reacher" tool
- reaching overhead
- unloading a dishwasher, washing machine, and dryer
- sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, and raking
- unloading a car trunk



WASHING YOUR FACE

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Squat down slightly and stick your rear end out.
- Bend from the hips, not the back.
- Keep your back in a mid-range position, not too arched, not too rounded.



BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Squat down slightly and stick your rear end out.
- Keep your back in a mid range position, not too arched, not too rounded.
- Place one hand on the counter to brace yourself.
- Keep your body as upright as possible.



GETTING OUT OF BED



- Gently tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Roll to your side keeping your hips and shoulders moving together.
- Move your feet slowly off the side of the bed as you push with your arms into the bed to sit up.

GETTING INTO BED



- Sit at the edge of the bed and place your hands on the bed.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Slowly lower your body towards the bed with your arms as you lift your feet up.
- Lie onto your side.

SITTING TO STANDING

- Scoot to the edge of your seat.
- Place your feet slightly apart with one foot in front of the other.
- Bend forward from your hips.
- Stand by pushing with your legs and using your arms to push off the seat.
- Stand with a slight lean towards your front foot, keeping your back in a good position.



SQUATTING

- Place your feet shoulder width apart.
- Bend your knees and slowly squat.
- Stick your rear end out as you go down.
- Keep the object close to your body.
- Only squat as far as you can without rounding your back.



HALF KNEELING (Alternate Squat)



- Stand with your feet apart and one foot in front of the other.
- Bend your knees and slowly squat.
- Stick your rear end out and avoid twisting your back as you go down.
- Keep the object close to your body.
- Only squat as far as you can without rounding your back.

REACHER



- Use a reacher* to pick up objects if you are unable to squat low.
- Stand with one foot in front of the other next to the object.
- Squat down a little until you can reach the object with the reacher.
- Do not twist your back to reach the object.

* Many drug stores and medical supply stores carry reachers.

REACHING OVERHEAD

- Get as close to the object as possible.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Flatten your low back slightly to keep it from arching while reaching over head.
- Use a sturdy step stool so you do not need to reach as high.



UNLOADING THE DISHWASHER

- Stand as close to the dishwasher as possible.
- Place your feet shoulder width apart.
- Place one hand on the counter top.
- Squat down and reach one item at a time.
- Place like items in a small stack on the counter.
- Stand up and lift the small stack.
- Move in front of the cabinet and place the stack into the cabinet.



UNLOADING THE WASHING MACHINE



- Place one hand at the edge of the washing machine to brace.
- Squat down to reach the wet clothes.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Pull small amounts out at a time.
- Move in front of the dryer, squat down to put the clothes into the dryer.
- Do not lean over and twist to throw the wet clothes into the dryer.

UNLOADING THE DRYER



- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Squat down and pull small amounts of clothes out at a time.
- Stand and place them in a basket.

SWEEPING / MOPPING / RAKING

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Stand in a slight squat position holding onto the handle.
- Keep your arms close to your body.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Shift your weight from one foot to the other as you sweep.
- Do not twist your back or bend forward.



WEEDING / KNEELING

- Get down on your hands and knees.
- Place a pad under your knees.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Do not let your back sag.
- Grab weeds that are close to your body and pull slowly.



VACUUMING



- Stand with your feet apart and one foot forward.
- Start in a slight squat position.
- Keep your arms close to your body.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Shift your weight from one foot to the other as you move the vacuum.
- Do not twist your back or bend forward.

UNLOADING THE TRUNK



- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Squat down and stick your rear end out.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Pull the object as close to you as possible before lifting.
- Lift using your legs.



This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

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