

Proper Body Mechanics

GOAL

To increase awareness of proper body mechanics to prevent back or other injuries.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

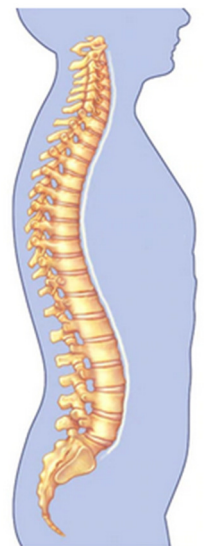
- Understand the importance of proper body mechanics
- Know how to avoid injuries that poor body mechanics can create
- Know different techniques for correct posture in common activities

WHY IS PROPER BODY MECHANICS IMPORTANT?

Body mechanics is a term used to describe the ways we move as we go about our daily lives. It includes how we hold our bodies when we sit, stand, lift, bend, and sleep. Good body mechanics are based on good posture and is when the spine is in a “neutral” or sloppy “S” position like the picture to the right.

Proper technique is crucial when we are performing tasks like lifting, vacuuming, sweeping, washing dishes, reaching for objects, etc. We don’t just perform these tasks at work though, we do them at home as well, so it’s equally important for us to practice proper techniques outside of work, too. Poor technique can lead to low back pain, shoulder pain, and neck pain and could create knee problems to name a few which can affect your quality of life.

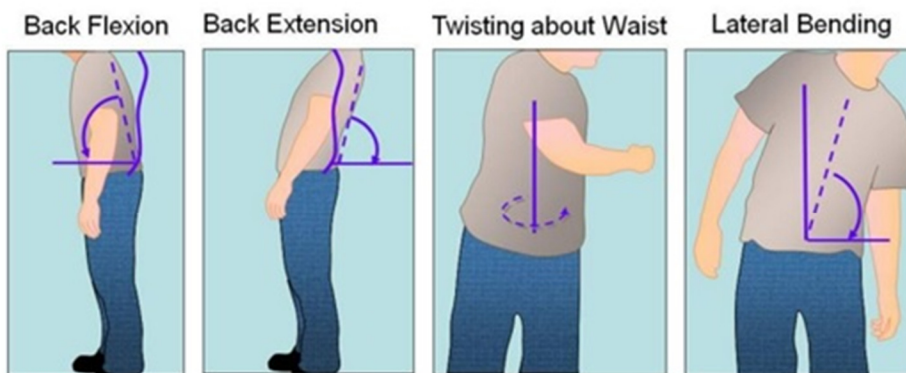
Your spine is the backbone of your ability to move, sleep, and function properly. Without a healthy spine, your everyday tasks and movements such as sitting up straight, walking, and moving around can become extremely difficult or painful.



NEUTRAL SPINE

INJURY PREVENTION

Avoid putting any part of your body in awkward positions. If you feel discomfort, pain, or other symptoms while performing a task, you may need to change the way you are doing the job. Take a look at how you are positioning your body to ensure you are not overstretching or twisting your body. Check your posture, too. Make sure you are positioning yourself close to the work area as safely possible to avoid overreaching. **Try your best to maintain good posture and avoid twisting.**



EXAMPLES OF AWKWARD BODY POSITIONS

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KNOWLEDGE CHECK True or False?

1. I only need to practice proper body mechanics at work.
2. Some ways I can prevent injuries include avoiding awkward body positions and maintaining good posture.

CORRECT POSTURES

Here are some ways to help maintain good posture when performing different activities.

PARTIAL GOLF PICK-UP

This is a good way to retrieve items without putting all the stress on your lower back.

- Be sure to place one hand on a stable surface.
- Retrieve item while keeping your back straight and pivoting at your hips.
- Move the object as close to you as possible before lifting it up.
- Keep one leg straight behind you to balance your weight as you reach forward.



THE HALF KNEEL LIFT

This may be helpful when lifting objects from a low shelf or table.

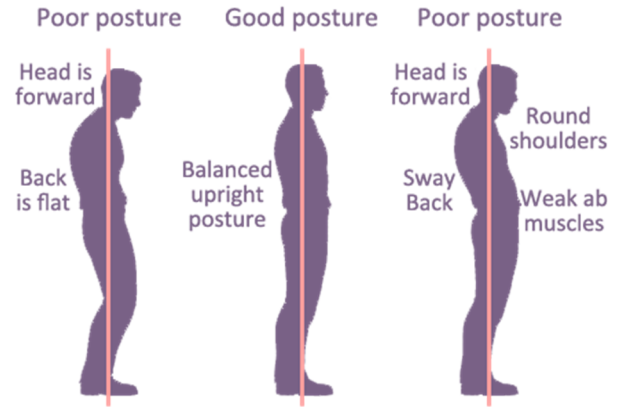
- Stand close to the object to be lifted and squat down onto one knee.
- Keep your back straight. Pick up the object, slide it on to your thigh and then cradle the object against your body.
- Tighten your stomach muscles and slowly stand, using your leg muscles, **not your back.**



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STANDING

- Keep your knees slightly bent/unlocked.
- Maintain a neutral spine.
- Make sure that your hips are not shifting forward – there should be a fairly straight line from your ear to your shoulder to your hips to your ankle.
- If you will be standing for an extended period, use a small step and alternate having one foot on the step, then the other.
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes, and use an anti-fatigue mat.



WHEN PUSHING

- Use the weight of your body to help push an object. Be careful not to use your back.
- Keep your feet apart just as in the standing position.
- Keep your back straight.
- Lower your body to get close to the object. Bend at your knees. **DO NOT BEND AT YOUR WAIST.**
- If the object you are pushing is too heavy, ask someone to help you.



THE TAKEAWAYS

If you remember nothing else about this training, at least remember the following:

1. Practice good body mechanics at work and at home.
2. Try your best to maintain good posture and **avoid twisting.**
3. Always ask for help if an object is too heavy to lift or push.





Proper Body Mechanics

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Proper body mechanics is important to practice both at work and at home.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Without a _____, your everyday tasks and movements such as sitting up straight, walking, and moving around can become extremely difficult or painful.
 - a. Long spine
 - b. Straight spine
 - c. Healthy Spine

3. You should avoid putting your body in awkward positions.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. If objects are too heavy to lift or push, you should _____.
 - a. Tell yourself you can do it.
 - b. Just leave it there and forget about doing the task.
 - c. Inform your supervisor or ask for help.

5. When lifting loads, you should use your leg muscles instead of your _____.
 - a. Arms
 - b. Back
 - c. Legs

6. When standing, you should _____.
 - a. Keep your legs slightly bent/unlocked.
 - b. Maintain a neutral spine.
 - c. Wear comfortable shoes.
 - d. All of the above.

7. Poor technique can lead to pain in your lower back, shoulder, and neck, and could create knee problems, to name a few, which can affect your quality of life.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Name: _____ Site: _____

Date: _____