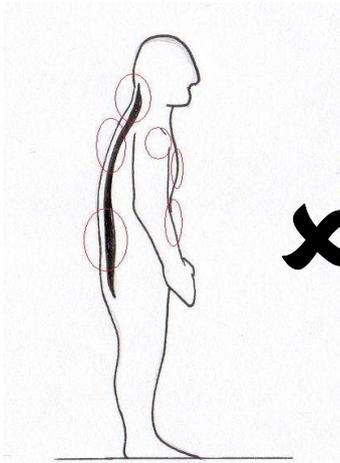


## How is my posture?

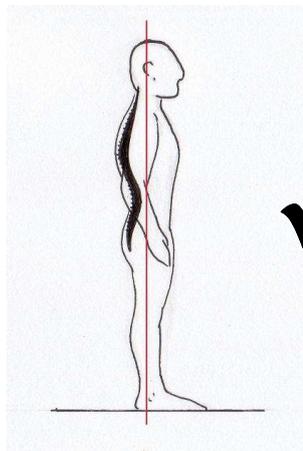
Having a good posture uses the least amount of effort from your body and places the least amount of stress on your ligaments and bones. It will place your bones and joints in the correct alignment so that the muscles will be used most efficiently which in turn results in less muscle fatigue, ligament strain and overuse problems. Maintaining good posture in everyday activities requires practice so that it becomes second nature. It may feel strange at first but once you have achieved a good posture you should notice a reduction your postural aches and pains.

### Standing



The ideal standing posture is not actually standing straight like a soldier as this will increase the strain on your lower back. However, being too relaxed so that your chin is sticking forwards, your shoulders

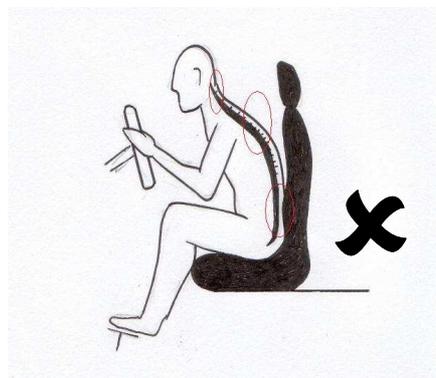
droop down and you are slouching forwards will also place extra work on your back muscles.



The ideal standing posture will be having your head comfortably over your trunk and not poking forwards, your feet should be shoulder-width

apart, your chest up and your knees slightly bent so that your hips are not pushed forwards. So if an imaginary straight line was drawn from your head down to your feet, it will pass from your earlobe, through the tip of your shoulder, down the middle of the hip bones, just in front of the centre of your knee joint and finish through your ankle joint. It can take a while to get used to maintaining a good standing posture and may feel uncomfortable at first. This discomfort may be eased by stretching muscles that have become shortened – your physiotherapist will be able to advise you on suitable exercises. As you get better with maintaining this posture in standing, try to practice this posture when walking as well.

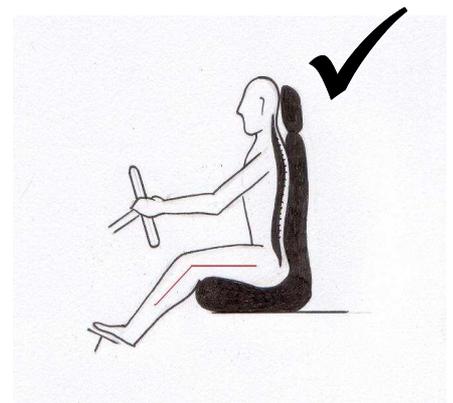
### Sitting



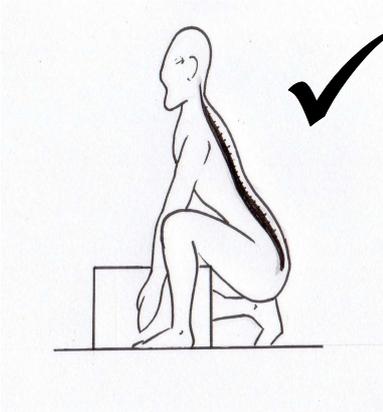
Slouching when in a seated position is one of the most common causes of back ache. In the driving seat, it is important to be in a relaxed yet supported position for the back. Adjust the backrest of the seat so

that your whole back is supported and move the seat to a position where you can reach the steering wheel without having to strain forwards and can have your elbows slightly bent. Some cars have a lumbar support built into the seat – this should be used to support the curve in your lower back. If you do not have this feature, a small rolled up towel can be used to support the curve of the lower back. The knee should be at the same level or slightly higher than the hip and you should be able to reach and depress the pedals with your feet comfortably. The best knee angle is

about 130°. To minimise whiplash injuries in case of accident, the top of the head rest should be level with the top of your head and no lower than eye level.



## Lifting

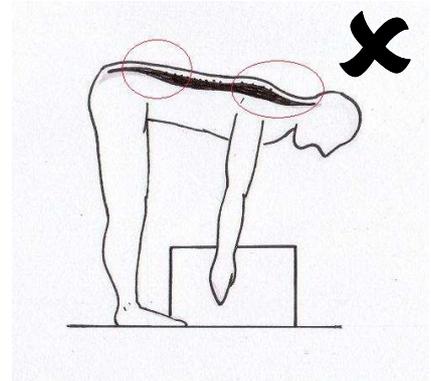


Many back injuries occur from improper lifting techniques. This doesn't only include lifting objects

that are too heavy but can also be caused by twisting your back when lifting, lifting objects that are too far away from the body and not using your leg muscles to help with the lift.

When lifting an object from the floor, position yourself close to the object with your feet apart and then bend your knees. Hold the object, tighten your stomach muscles and smoothly straighten your knees keeping your back straight as you lift up the object. Do not twist your back and do not lift the object with jerky movements. Hold the object

close to your body with your arms bent. **NEVER** lift an object by bending at the waist with straight legs.



## Don't Forget...

The body is made to move – it can be placed in positions for long periods of time but over time this will add more stress to the spine, so long periods of being in one position will be placing stresses on different parts of your back. Try to change your position regularly throughout the day or when doing the same activities, e.g. if sitting at the desk during the day take regular breaks to walk around and stretch your legs, if driving for a long period of time incorporate short rest stops and stretch your back, if standing for more than an hour try to alternate your body weight between each foot or place a foot on a small step to reduce the strain that is placed on the lower back. Keep yourself as flexible as possible with regular stretching exercises and think about adopting a good posture regularly throughout your day.

This information leaflet is intended for healthy individuals and can be used as a reference for good posture. If you experience any pain or have any concerns contact our clinic or your GP for further advice.

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