

SPINE EXERCISES

| PATIENT HOMEWORK

LOWER BACK

90/90 position (a.k.a the astronaut position)

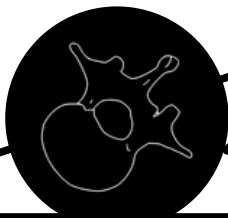


The 90/90 or astronaut position is an excellent rest position to try when you are suffering extremely painful lower back pain. Getting into this position decompresses your spine, removing any unwanted load from painful or injured areas so that you can at least catch your breath for a while. Whilst resting here, your body can get to work healing itself.

At home, you would try this up against your couch. Lie on the floor and bend your hips and knees both to 90 degrees so that your legs are lying on the seat of the couch. Stay here for about five minutes. It is called the astronaut position as this is the position your seat would face inside a space ship prior to blast off! Here are some extra things you can try for lower back relief, once you've rested in the astronaut position. Painful sleep?

Here's some more info...

exercises adapted from
<https://thephysicaltherapycentre.com.au/neck-and-back-exercises/>



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BASIC PRINCIPLES

PROTECTING YOUR BACK

CARRYING

Keep objects that you are lifting or carrying close to your body

- The farther the object is from your body, the greater the strain will be
- Slide objects close to you or step toward them before lifting



WORKING

Work with your upper body as close to upright as possible & minimize twisting of your upper body

- Work with loads between waist & shoulder height; keep loads off of the floor if possible
- For low level work, bend your knees, squat or kneel or consider a longer handled tool
- Move your feet or swivel your chair instead of twisting at the waist or neck, so that objects you are handling or looking at are always in front of you



NEUTRAL

Maintain the natural inward curve of your low back

- This curve has a tendency to flatten when you bend or sit, increasing the strain on the low back



INJURY

Unexpected movements are more likely to cause injuries than deliberate movements

- Keep walking surfaces clear & take care to avoid slips, trips or falls
- Make sure objects you are moving do not shift during transport
- Proper storage will minimize injuries related to sudden movements to catch falling objects



FOOTREST

Use a footrest for prolonged standing (~8 inches high can be used to help avoid static postures)

- Vary standing postures by shifting body weight from both to one or the other leg.





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WORK ORGANIZATION

PROTECTING YOUR BACK

TAKE BREAKS

Frequent short breaks are better than infrequent long breaks

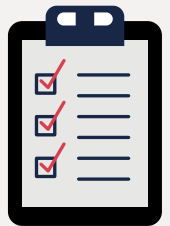


- The most important determinant of risk of injury is not the total time spent performing the activity; what is most important, is how long the activity is performed continuously without interruption
- Performing an activity for 2 hours all at once has a higher risk of injury than performing the 2 hours of activity in shorter segments, alternated with less fatiguing activities. This is because strained muscles heal if given time to heal & the healing time required depends on how long the muscles are strained. If muscles are strained for a long time, they'll need a relatively longer time to recover. Once discomfort occurs, muscles will take much longer to recover

ACTIVE REST

Rest break doesn't mean that no work can be performed

- Switching to a task that puts less strain on that muscle group
- Alternating sitting & standing tasks, or performing some stretches
- Alternating tasks that involve a lot of bending with those that utilize more upright postures
- Performing the task using different muscle groups (e.g., use your right hand instead of your left)
- When standing in one spot for prolonged periods, vary your posture by placing one foot on a footrest



EXTRA CARE

Take extra care & warm-up at high risk times

- After a day off, first thing in the morning or after waking up, after breaks or long periods of inactivity
- After sitting or after driving (the combination of sitting & vibration is especially hard on the back)



COMPUTER DESK ERGONOMICS

PROTECTING YOUR BACK

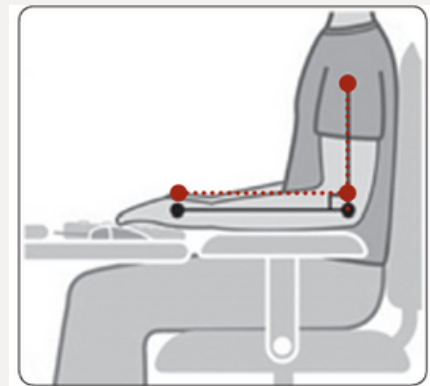
CHAIR

- Your chair should allow you to sit straight, with your arms relaxed at your side and your hands/wrists at a 90° angle to your keyboard/ desktop (chair should have short and adjustable armrests)
- Height of your chair should have your thighs horizontal to the floor, with your feet resting flat (if your feet don't reach the floor, use a footrest)
- Should be enough lumbar support to keep your back straight, with a slight lean of approximately 100°



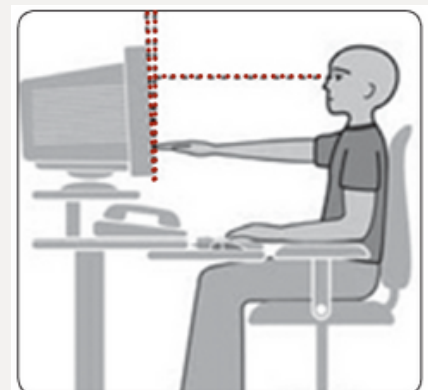
KEYBOARD & MOUSE

- Shoulders should be in a relaxed position, arms horizontally in front of you, and the mouse within easy reach
- Keep your wrists straight and flat, NOT bent up or down
- Your keyboard should be fairly flat, or on a negative slant
- Consider a keyboard tray to help keep your hands and arms in a neutral position
- Use a light touch on the keys; try not to pound, even with a deadline just moments away
- Keep your mouse as close to your keyboard as possible



MONITOR & WORK STATION

- Your workstation should be positioned to avoid glare from windows or overhead lighting
- Your monitor should be perpendicular to any window
- Line up your eyes with the upper third of the screen, and about 55 cm to 65 cm (22-26 inches) or an arms length away
- Adjust the brightness of your screen according to your comfort level on a regular basis
- Keep ambient lighting low and add task lighting as needed
- Keep your screen and eyeglasses clean





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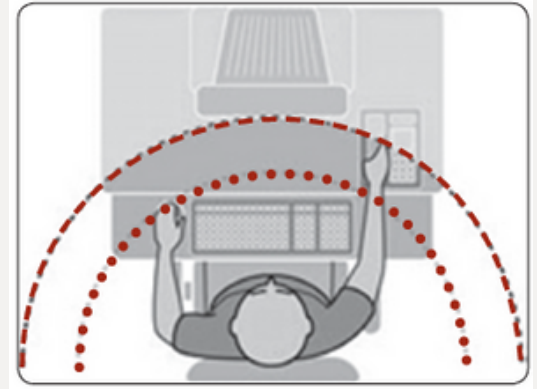
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COMPUTER DESK ERGONOMICS

PROTECTING YOUR BACK

TELEPHONE & GAGETS

- Your phone and any other gadget (calculator, stapler) you use regularly should be within 25 cm (10 inches) away from you.
- Don't cradle your phone on your shoulder while using the computer; when multi-tasking, hold the phone in one hand and the mouse in the other, use a headset or speaker phone
- If you're referring to documents as you work on the computer, use a document holder, set close to the monitor



LAPTOPS & ROAD TRIPS

- If you're packing more than 10 pounds, use a wheeled carrying case or try a backpack with padded straps
- Try to get a bulkhead or exit row seat (more room), and you'll be more comfortable working on your laptop
- Avoid screen reflection by lowering the window shade and overhead light
- Adjust your chair height and laptop in your hotel room or while working in a conference room. Your arms should remain at a 90° angle to your laptop
- Use a phone book or briefcase to act as a footrest – avoid positions that strain your neck

**GET UP, WALK AROUND & TAKE
REGULAR BREAKS EVERY 45 MINUTES
MAXIMUM!!!!**