

Ten Tips for a Healthy Back

Follow these simple guidelines to keep your back in good shape.

1) Standing

Keeping one foot forward of the other, with knees slightly bent, takes the pressure off your low back.

2) Sitting

Sitting with your knees slightly higher than your hips provides good low back support.

3) Reaching

Stand on a stool to reach things that are above your shoulder level.

4) Moving Heavy Items

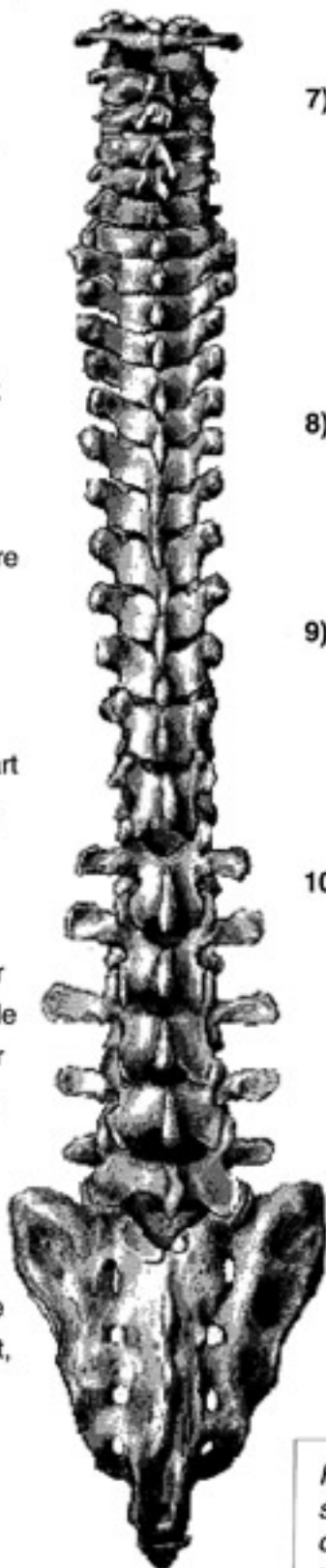
Pushing is easier on your back than pulling. Use your arms and legs to start the push. If you must lift a heavy item, get someone to help you.

5) Lifting

Kneel down on one knee with the other foot flat on the floor, as near as possible to the item you are lifting. Lift with your legs, not your back, keeping the object close to your body at all times.

6) Carrying

Two small objects (one in either hand) may be easier to handle than one large one. If you must carry one large object, keep it close to your body.



7) Sleeping

Sleeping on your back puts 55 lbs. of pressure on your back. Putting a couple of pillows under your knees cuts the pressure in half. Lying on your side with a pillow between your knees also reduces the pressure.

8) Weight Control

Additional weight puts a strain on your back. Keep within 10 lbs. of your ideal weight for a healthier back.

9) Quit Smoking

Smokers are more prone to back pain than nonsmokers because nicotine restricts the flow of blood to the discs that cushion your vertebrae.

10) Minor Back Pain

Treat minor back pain with anti-inflammatories and gentle stretching, followed by an ice pack.

The more you know, the better chance you have of avoiding back pain – which affects 80% of the adult population and is the second most common reason people visit their doctors. If you have back pain or want to know how to avoid it, consult a spine care specialist.

For more information and to find a spine specialist near you, visit the North American Spine Society Web site at www.spine.org, or call toll-free (877) SpineDr.