

NECK & BACK PAIN - PROPER SITTING POSTURE



Sitting improperly for long periods of time can lead to many problems involving the neck and back. Those whose jobs require mostly sitting are at an increased risk of experiencing neck and back pain.

Your low back moves in two directions: flexion and extension. Flexion is characterized by the forward bending of the spine (e.g. slouching) whereas extension is characterized by the backward bending of the spine (e.g. arching). In order to attain proper sitting posture, you should maintain a neutral back position (the midpoint between extreme flexion and extension). You can achieve a neutral back position actively or passively. Actively maintaining a good low back curve requires the use of your abdominal muscles and spinal musculature. Passively achieving a good low back curve requires the use of external lumbar (low back) support such as a lumbar roll.

Good low back posture promotes good neck posture. Poor low back posture promotes a forward head posture which can stress the back of your neck causing headaches, shoulder pain, fatigue, pain between your shoulder blades, and arm symptoms.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPER SITTING:

1. **ELBOW POSITION:** While sitting upright, your elbows should be at a 90 degree angle. If they are not, move your seat up or down. If you use armrests, they should be high enough to slightly lift your arms at the shoulders to take stress off your neck and shoulders.
2. **EYES:** If you are sitting at a computer with your head facing forward, your eyes should be aimed at the center of your computer screen. If your screen is higher or lower than your gaze, raise or lower it accordingly.
3. **THIGHS AND CALVES:** Your feet should be flat on the floor with a 90 degree angle at your knees. You should be able to slide your fingers easily under your thighs and slide your fist behind your calf and the front of your chair. If you cannot do these things, you can prop your

feet up with a footrest or add a lumbar support to the back of your chair.

4. **HEAD:** Your ears should be aligned over your shoulders.

To help you maintain good posture, we offer lumbar rolls. Lumbar rolls can be used in your chair or car seat. Ask a staff member for details

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