

Good Posture Tips For The Office

Reducing The Stress of Sitting

*Acknowledgements: University of Maryland Department of Environmental Safety
Parley International – www.parley.com*

It may surprise you to know that sitting can put as much strain on your back as standing or even lifting. The stress of leaning over printouts and paperwork, slouching in an uncomfortable chair and spending long hours in one position leaves many office workers with aching, tired backs. But beating back stress is simple--and it's up to you.

Sitting Pretty

Good posture helps reduce the stress of sitting in one position for prolonged periods. The secret to good posture is in maintaining the balance of the three natural curves of your spine. These curves work together to distribute body weight evenly. If you slouch forward or hunch your shoulders, you not only look bad, you also stress your spine.

Good Posture Tips

In many cases your office set-up may not promote good posture. With a few modifications, you'll be sitting pretty.

- Use a lumbar roll to support your lower back. You can buy a pre-made lumbar roll or roll up a towel and place it in the small of your back to provide support in this area.
- Adjust your chair so that your arms are at desk level and your feet are on the floor. If your feet don't touch the floor, use a footrest.
- Position yourself so that your weight is shifted forward (off your spine). A seat wedge or folded towel two to three inches thick may help.
- Take short breaks at least once an hour to stretch your spine.
- Avoid crossing your legs. This interferes with the circulation to your legs and throws your spine out of balance.

You Know It's Right

Although it may take some adjusting to get yourself comfortable, once you've established good habits you'll feel the results. Healthy work habits will help you maintain a healthy back for life.