

PROPER SITTING, STANDING, AND LIFTING

What is the proper position for sitting at work?

Prolonged sitting, especially if it involves use of a keyboard, puts a lot of stress on your muscles and joints. Neck and back problems can result, as well as overuse injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. To help prevent injury you can try to sit correctly and adjust your workstation according to the following guidelines:

- Keep your head up straight, not tilted forward or back.
- Keep your thighs parallel to the floor. Your knees should be at a 90° angle and should be no higher than your hips. Your feet should be flat on the floor. Use a footrest if needed.
- Use a chair with good lower back (lumbar) support for the normal curve in your back. For additional support you can use a lumbar roll, a small pillow, or a rolled up towel.
- Make sure there is 2 to 3 inches of space between the back of your knee and the edge of your seat.

If you are using a computer:

- The monitor and keyboard should be directly in front of you.
- When using a keyboard, keep your elbows bent at a 90° angle.
- The top of your monitor should be at or slightly below eye level.
- Your wrists should be in a neutral position, not tilted up or down. Use wrist rests for extra support.
- It is important to take frequent breaks during your workday and to avoid sitting for more than 1 hour at a time. Whenever possible, leave your chair and walk or stand for a minute or two. Take a mini-exercise break (1 to 2 minutes) every hour and a longer break (3 to 5 minutes), once every 2 to 3 hours. During your break, stretch your neck and back.

What if I stand at work?

If your job involves standing for most of the day you should:

- put one foot up on a footrest (about 6 to 8 inches high) to help decrease the pressure put on your spine
- stand as straight as possible to maintain the normal curves in your spine
- keep your work surface at or near waist level and try not to bend forward too much

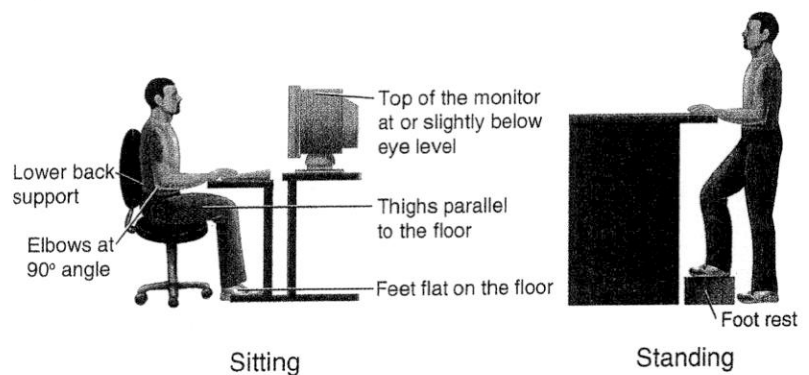
- wear sturdy shoes with good arch support
- do back strengthening exercises

How should I lift properly?

If your job involves **lifting**, make sure you use the proper lifting technique to avoid injury. The key to proper lifting is to maintain the natural curve in your back by squatting down rather than bending over at the waist. To lift properly:

1. Position yourself as close to the load as possible.
2. Stand with your feet apart and with one foot slightly in front of the other with your toes pointing slightly outward.
3. Test the weight of the load first and get help if it seems too heavy or bulky.
4. Bend your knees and squat down to a comfortable level.
5. Lift the object and bring it close to your body.
6. Return to a standing position by pushing up with your legs and buttocks.

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Lifting

