



## Back Safety: Bending

Bending can strain or even injure your back. Follow the tips below to move safely and protect your back as you perform everyday activities.

### Bending Over

- Keep your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Move your whole body as one unit.
- Bend at your hips and knees, not at your waist.
- Flatten your stomach and tighten your leg muscles.
- To keep your spine straight, let your buttocks move out behind you. Don't try to tuck them under.
- If you need to, place one hand on a sturdy object for support.



**Always face the object you're bending in front of.**

### Bending to the Floor

- Lower yourself to one knee. If you can, rest one hand on a sturdy object to help lower yourself.
- Rest one arm on your raised knee.
- Don't bend at the waist.
- Do not hunch your back or neck to reach to the floor. Instead, bend more at your hips and knees to get closer.



**Bend at your hips and knees instead of at your waist.**

### Notes



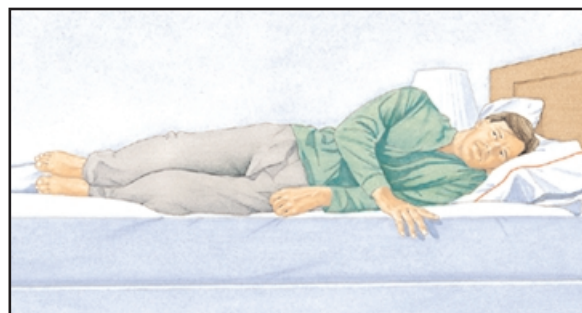
## Back Safety: Getting Into and Out of Bed

Good posture protects your back when you sit, stand, and walk. It is also important while getting into and out of bed. Follow the steps below to get out of bed. Reverse them to get into bed.

**Safety Tip:** After you stand up, wait a moment before walking to be sure you're not dizzy.

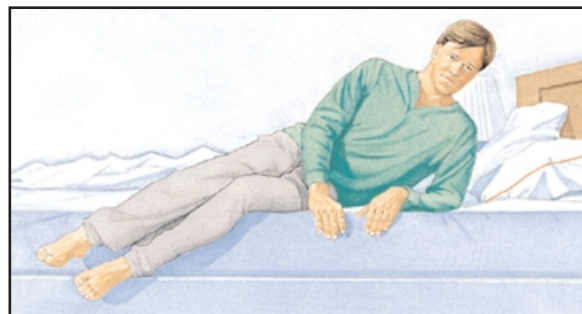
### 1 Roll Onto Your Side

- Keep your knees together.
- Flatten your stomach muscles to keep your back from arching.
- Put your hands on the bed in front of you.



### 2 Raise Your Body

- Push your upper body off the bed as you swing your legs to the floor.
- Keeping your back straight, move your whole body as one unit. Don't bend or twist at the waist.
- Let the weight of your legs help you move.



### 3 Stand Up

- Lean forward from your hip and roll onto the balls of your feet.
- Flatten your stomach muscles to keep your back from arching.
- Using your arm and leg muscles, push yourself to a standing position.



## Notes



## Back Safety: Lifting

Lifting can strain or even injure your back. Follow these tips to keep your back safe while you bend, lift, and carry.

### Protect Your Back While Lifting



- 1 • Face the object.
  - With your back straight, get down on one knee.
  - If you can, tilt the object so one side lifts off the ground.
  - Keep the object close to you.



- 2 • Tighten your stomach muscles.
  - Use your legs, arms, and buttocks to lift, not your back.
  - Avoid twisting.
  - Lift the object to your knee.
  - Grasp the object firmly.



- 3 • Lift with your arms and legs, not your back.
  - Move quickly to help make this easier.

### To Carry an Object:

- Hold it close to your body.
- Bend your knees slightly as you walk. The heavier the object, the more you should bend your knees.
- Get help with heavy or unbalanced objects.

### Notes



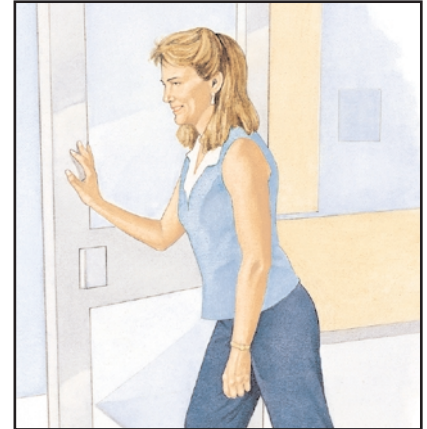


## Back Safety: Pushing and Pulling

Pushing can be hard on your back. Pulling can be even harder. So, push rather than pull when you can. Follow the tips on this sheet to help protect your back.

### Pushing a Light Object

- Bend your knees slightly. Keep your ears, shoulders, and hips in line.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Lean in slightly toward the object you're pushing.
- Use your legs and the weight of your body to move the object.
- Take small steps.



### Pushing a Heavy Object

- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Bend your knees.
- Lean in toward the object you're pushing. The heavier the object, the more you should lean.
- Try not to hunch your back: Keep it straight.
- Use your legs and the weight of your body to move the object.
- Take small steps.



### Pulling

- Face the object you're pulling.
- Keep your knees slightly bent.
- Step backward and pull the object with you.
- Don't twist your body. If you're using one hand, putting the other hand on your hip can help keep you from twisting.
- When pulling heavy objects, lean back, bending at the knees and hips. Keep your arms straight. Let your body weight pull the load.



### Notes



## Back Safety: Sitting

Sitting can strain your back if you don't do it right. Learn the right moves to protect your back.

### Sitting Down

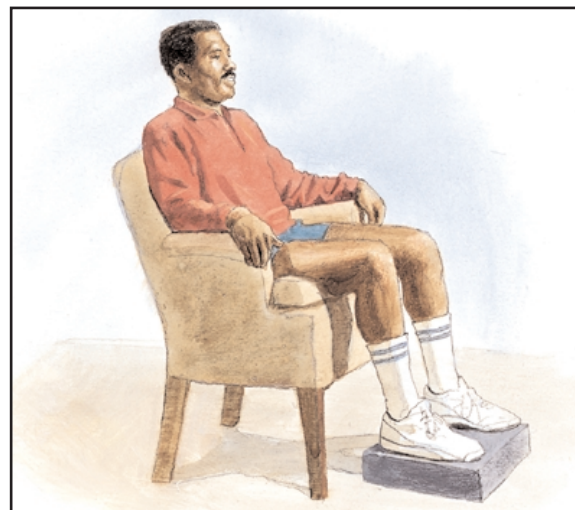
Follow these steps to sit down. Reverse them to get back up.

- Make sure the chair is behind you.
- Place one foot slightly behind the other.
- Tighten your stomach muscles. Bend forward from the hips, keeping your back straight.
- Hold the armrests or sides of the seat for support.
- Bend your knees. Use your leg muscles to lower yourself onto the seat.
- Scoot back in the seat until you are comfortable.



### Sitting Safely

- Keep your feet flat. Don't cross your legs.
- A low footrest (no higher than 8 inches) may help.
- A support behind your lower back or between your shoulder blades can help make you more comfortable.
- When sitting for long periods, change your position from time to time. Also, get up every half hour and move around.



### Notes



## Back Safety: Sleeping Positions

Good posture protects your back when you sit, stand, and walk. It is also important while sleeping. Keep your ears, shoulders and hips in line. Try the tips below. Also, be sure to follow any guidelines from your health care provider.

### Safe Sleeping

- Ask your health care provider how firm your mattress should be.
- Find a position that keeps your back aligned and comfortable.
- Fill gaps between your body and the mattress with pillows.
- Never sleep on your back without bending your legs.
- Never sleep on your stomach.

### Turning in Bed

- If you change positions, you will need to move your pillows. This can become so natural that you hardly wake up.
- When you turn in bed, move your whole body as one unit.
- Tighten your stomach muscles. Bend your knees slightly toward your chest.
- Roll to one side, keeping your ears, shoulders, and hips in line.
- Be careful not to bend or twist at the waist.

### If You Lie on Your Back



**Place pillows under your legs from your thighs to your ankles.**

### If You Lie on Your Side



**Support your upper body and top leg with pillows.**

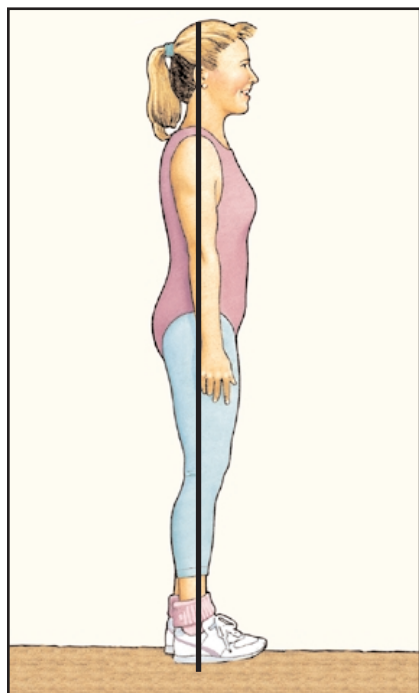
### Notes





## Back Safety: Standing

Good posture decreases back pain by reducing strain on your muscles. Remember to check your posture, using the self-help tips below, every time you move or adjust position.



### Standing

- To help keep your spine straight, line up your ears, shoulders, and hips.
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Or, place one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Keep your knees relaxed and stomach muscles slightly flattened.



### Bending Over

- Bend at your hips and knees.
- Don't bend at your waist or round your back.
- Rest your weight on your arms if possible.



### Working

- When standing for a long time, put one foot on a footrest. This may help ease strain on your back. The footrest should be about 5-8 inches high.
- When reaching for objects over your head, use a step-ladder. When you can't, be sure to tighten your stomach muscles to keep your back from arching.

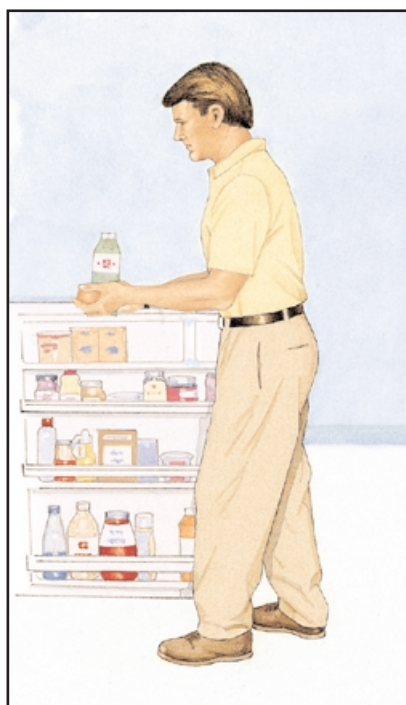
### Notes



## Back Safety: Turning

Protect your back while you stand or turn. Turning can twist your spine if you don't do it right. Keep the tips on this sheet in mind as you move.

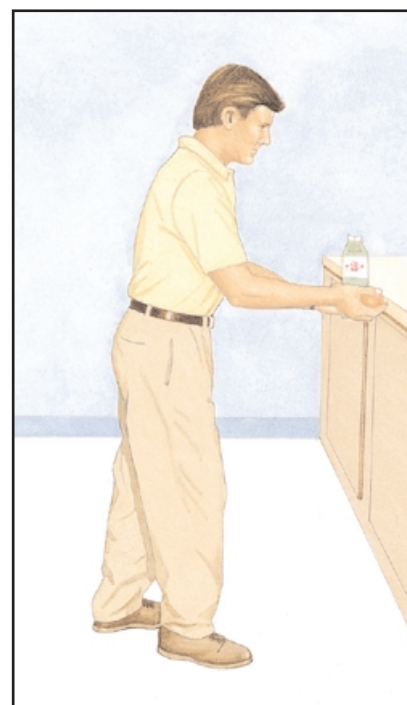
### Protect Your Back When You Turn



- 1**
- To turn, move your feet instead of twisting your body at the waist.
  - Turn your hips and shoulders together.



- 2**
- Take short steps around.
  - Try pivoting on the heel closest to where you're headed.



- 3**
- Step forward out of the turn.
  - Keep your knees relaxed and your stomach muscles tightened.

### Notes