



ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

Dr. Ivo Ahlquist, Chiropractor © 2010

YOUR BACK IN BALANCE

The most common cause of back pain is problems with how the joints of the spine move — these are called *subluxations*. These subluxations are usually caused by one of the following mechanisms

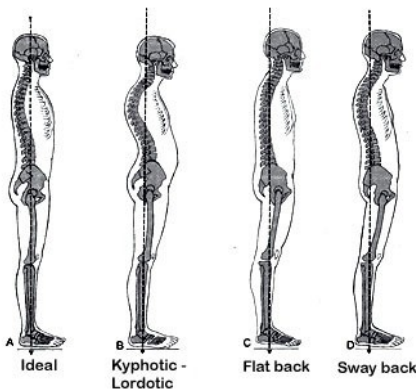
1. Traumatic events
2. Activities of daily living.
3. Stress & environment

To get the most benefit from your chiropractic care, you need to address the **types** of things you do on a daily (and repetitive basis) and look to change **how** you do them. This is especially true if they are putting your body and spine under strain. Here are some simple ways to start this process. I can't look over your shoulder all day to check so if this sheet raises a problem with something you do, please ask for advice.

POSTURE

Correct posture should be the goal of every person (not just every chiropractic client) You will be given exercises as part of your care. Do them! They will make you more conscious of your posture in every-

Four types of postural alignment



day situations.

Posture is not just about how you stand, its also about how you sit, sleep, rest, exercise, work and drive. Learn the basics of correct posture so that you can assess all these

things yourself.

VEHICLES

Sit on the edge of the seat when getting in, then swing both legs in together. Avoid putting one leg in then sitting down heavily

If you have your seat close to the dash, then move it back when getting in and out to allow for easy maneuvering. This is especially important with low back pain.

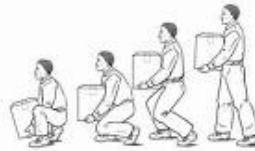
PHONES AND MOBILES

Switch hands when using the phone for long periods and keep your elbow by your side. Avoid cradling the phone between your ear and shoulder. It can destabilize your cervical spine and then require more chiropractic care. Anyone who uses the phone regularly should use a hands-free kit or headset.



LIFTING

Everyone should know the basic rules for lifting; weight close to your body, bend your knees, abs tight and avoid twisting. There are circumstance when it is difficult to lift correctly, such as lifting bags in or out of cars. Be aware that these situations are often physically stressful, so lift with caution. Even if the weight is light but repetitive, it's just as important to have correct technique.



If you bend forward with a bent back, once you pass 30deg your back muscles lose the ability to hold you upright, and so all the other structures in your back then have to hold you up—something they're not designed for.

Using support braces or belts can reduce injury risk but is not recommended long-term. If you do a lot of heavy lifting, please discuss your needs so we can devise a specific strengthening routine for you.

STRESS

Most people forgot how much of an impact stress can have on your spine, your nervous system and consequently your health. To discover more please have a look through the "Stress" info sheet.



BEDS

There is a vast array of choices when buying a new bed, and beds are definitely not created equal. To make it easier we now offer consultations for choosing the right pillow and mattress as part of your care. If you or anyone you knows is in the market for either then please book a time at reception.



In addition I have a sheet on choosing the right mattress on our website thrivechiro.com.au.

SLEEPING POSITIONS & PILLOWS

The best type of pillow you use is related to how you sleep. The ideal pillow is one which supports your head so that you maintain correct posture through your neck and low back. The best **positions** for sleeping are semi-foetal or flat on your back. Front lying is hard on both the low back and neck, while the recovery position tends to cause a sway back problem and cause low back and neck ache in the morning.

GETTING IN OR OUT OF BED

From standing, sit on the edge of the bed, then with your legs together, swing them up as you lay down on your side. Support your upper body with your arms as you do so. Reverse the pattern for getting up. This is especially useful if you have low back pain, but it also makes sense to get into the pattern of doing this all the time.



SITTING

With office chairs use all the adjustments to maintain an upright and well supported posture. Try to maintain a normal curve in the low back, a lumbar roll can assist here, but often tight hamstring muscles can be a problem in achieving this. To get an idea, the 'rolls Royce' of office chairs are "Aeron" brand, and a local supplier is www.workarena.com.au. They're expensive chairs but you can get an idea what can be done when budget is no issue.



Using a Swiss Ball as an alternative to a chair is an alternative, but generally when using one to alternate every 2 hours or so between it and a good supportive chair.

Another option is to use a balance disc on top of your chair to mimic the benefits of the Swiss Ball, without the bulk. We have these available in the clinic if you'd like to take a look.



When working at a desk, elevate materials to avoid neck fatigue. Problems such as RSI are often caused from incorrect use of office furniture, not the furniture itself. Plan to have regular rests and breaks from your desk.

In lounge chairs try to minimise positions where your spine is twisted

or bent at unusual angles, such as using an arm rest as a pillow. Very soft chairs can also be a problem. Poor posture over the length of a program can cause pulling and stretching of ligaments and other connective tissue and lead to or irritate back pain.

Cross your legs at the ankles, not at the knees. The latter causes twisting of your low back, as well as the possibility of restricting blood flow to the lower legs. Avoid sitting with a wallet in your rear pocket.

REST

Try to set aside a time each day to fully relax, both mentally and physically. Spend 10-15 minutes in a comfortable, quiet position and allow your mind to focus on just one thing. This is really a form of meditation. Rest is a vital component of restoring and maintaining your body



with optimal health. Rest is the time your body heals, if it's duration and quality is poor, your health will suffer.

So be sure to get plenty of sleep. This recommended amount varies but 6-8 hours seems to be the 'right' amount for most people. Large variation in your sleep patterns can also be a problem: Monday-morning-itis can be due to changing sleep patterns over the weekend. You may find it more relaxing to maintain your sleeping patterns through the weekend (well ok, allow a short sleep in), so that you wake refreshed on Mondays.

If you find you fall asleep easily in unusual positions (such as during breast feeding or as a passenger in a car) then consider getting a travel pillow to provide some support to your neck. Better still if you fall sleep, get someone to wake you and send you to bed where you can sleep better.

PLAYING DOCTOR - PLEASE DON'T

Avoid rubbing, probing or poking the areas your chiropractor has adjusted. Allow these areas to heal in their own time.

Avoid sudden twists and turns or movements beyond what feels like normal limits of motions, especially of the neck.



Trying to adjust (or manipulate) your own spine, or getting a friend to do the same is strongly discouraged. It makes no sense to

have an untrained person manipulate your spine. The chances of an adverse reaction or injury are significantly higher, plus if you get stuck in a habit of self manipulation there is the long term risk that your actions will lead to early degenerative changes.

If there were movements or activities that were painful or irritating when you first started at the clinic, then at least while you are still in the intensive phase of care try to avoid these as much as possible. This doesn't mean turn into a couch potato, just that if your spine is struggling with day to day living, adding stress through exercises or other activities can simply reignite the symptoms. Often a short break from some activities can mean you can get back into things far quicker than if you try and work through the symptoms.

BE INVOLVED

Remember that vertebral subluxations typically have no symptoms, so don't put off your appointments because you have no pain. Allow your chiropractor to assess your spine, and discuss your care with him.



The health care of the future will be a joint venture between the patient and the doctor. Be involved in your health and be proactive in having a healthy lifestyle. If you have any questions about any phase of your health care, please ask your chiropractor.