

FamilyCircle

20+

FAST & HEALTHY DINNERS

- Spring Veggies
- New Chicken Recipes
- Slow Cooker & More

DIET FAILS
THAT PACK
ON POUNDS

**The Secret to a
Pain-Free Back**

**CAKE MIX
HACKS**
YOU'D SWEAR
TASTE HOMEMADE

50

**AMAZING
NATIONAL
PARKS**



MAY 2016

familycircle.com

DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 10, 2016

\$2.79





The **20-MINUTE** Back Fix

Slouching isn't sexy. Neither is pain. Follow our expert advice and avoid the pitfalls of poor posture in five easy moves.

BY AMY ROBERTS, CPT

WHEN IT COMES TO THE HUMAN BODY, Newton's first law was wrong: A body at rest doesn't remain at rest. Even when you're seemingly sitting still, you unconsciously tense some muscles (like the lower back, chest and hip flexors). And if you're not paying attention, you may slip into a slumped posture that's not only unattractive but potentially harmful to your health. "Poor posture is one of the most significant contributors to back and neck pain," says personal trainer Julie Blandin, PT, a faculty member at the Postural Restoration Institute in Lincoln, NE. It can also negatively affect your breathing and your digestion. But you can retrain your muscles to find balanced posture. Follow our advice and try the quick daily workout on page 122. Do two to three sets (with just one minute of rest in between) and you'll be standing taller in a week!

Sit Prettier

You don't have to take it anymore—the bad posture that comes from long stretches of time at work spent on your butt, that is. Incorporate these strategies into your job description, stat.

HABIT #1: Make it easier on yourself.

"The biggest mistake we make is using too much effort to sit tall," Blandin says. Set up your workspace so your body is supported into a good position. Put feet flat on the floor or on a footrest so your knees are level with or slightly above your hips. Use lumbar support so you can sit back comfortably with shoulders stacked over your pelvis. And use those armrests! Otherwise, place elbows on the desk so your wrists are level with or below them.

HABIT #2: Breathe deeper.

Exercises that open your lungs naturally encourage you to sit up taller to take in more air, explains Eric Robertson, DPT, spokesperson for the American Physical Therapy Association. Cross your hands over your sternum and rest your elbows on the desk to support your torso. Breathe into your midsection for a count of three and out for six for 10 breaths.

HABIT #3: Resist the stillness.

"Move more so that you're not in any particular posture for any one period of time," says Robertson. Do seated stretches, such as elongating your arms out to a T to unhunch your shoulders, or digging your heels into the floor as if you were scooching your chair forward to awaken the hamstrings. Be sure to get up and walk around regularly to unfurl your body.

Posture-Perfect Moves

1. Inchworm

What it does: Activates your abdominals and shoulder muscles while elongating tight calves, hamstrings and lower back muscles.

How to do it: (A) Start in downward dog position. Breathe into your back and exhale as you take three small steps forward toward your hands. (B) Breathe in again, then exhale and walk your hands out three steps. Pause and breathe into your back. Repeat sequence 5–10 times.

2. Hip Lift

What it does: Fires up the hamstrings and trains the pelvis to help support and hold the natural curve of the lower spine.

How to do it: (A) Lie on the floor with your heels on a wall, knees and hips at 90 degrees. Place hands on your lower ribs and fully exhale to get ribs down and abs engaged. (B) Keeping your ribs down, push your heels into the wall as if they're pressing on an imaginary shelf and scoop your pelvis under and up slightly using the hamstrings. Hold for 1–3 seconds, then lower down. Do 10–15 reps.

3. Reach-Through

What it does: Works side core muscles, helping to shut off tension in the lower back.

How to do it: (A) Lie on your side with elbow bent, forearm on the floor perpendicular to body, and knees at 90 degrees

and slightly in front of your pelvis. Press into your shin and forearm to lift up your pelvis while extending the free arm toward the ceiling. (B) With control, thread your hand into the space between rib cage and floor without letting your pelvis drop. Hold for 1 second. Re-extend arm to repeat, and do 10 on each side.

4. Elevated Bridge

What it does: Opens up the chest while stimulating the glutes and hamstrings to support your lower back.

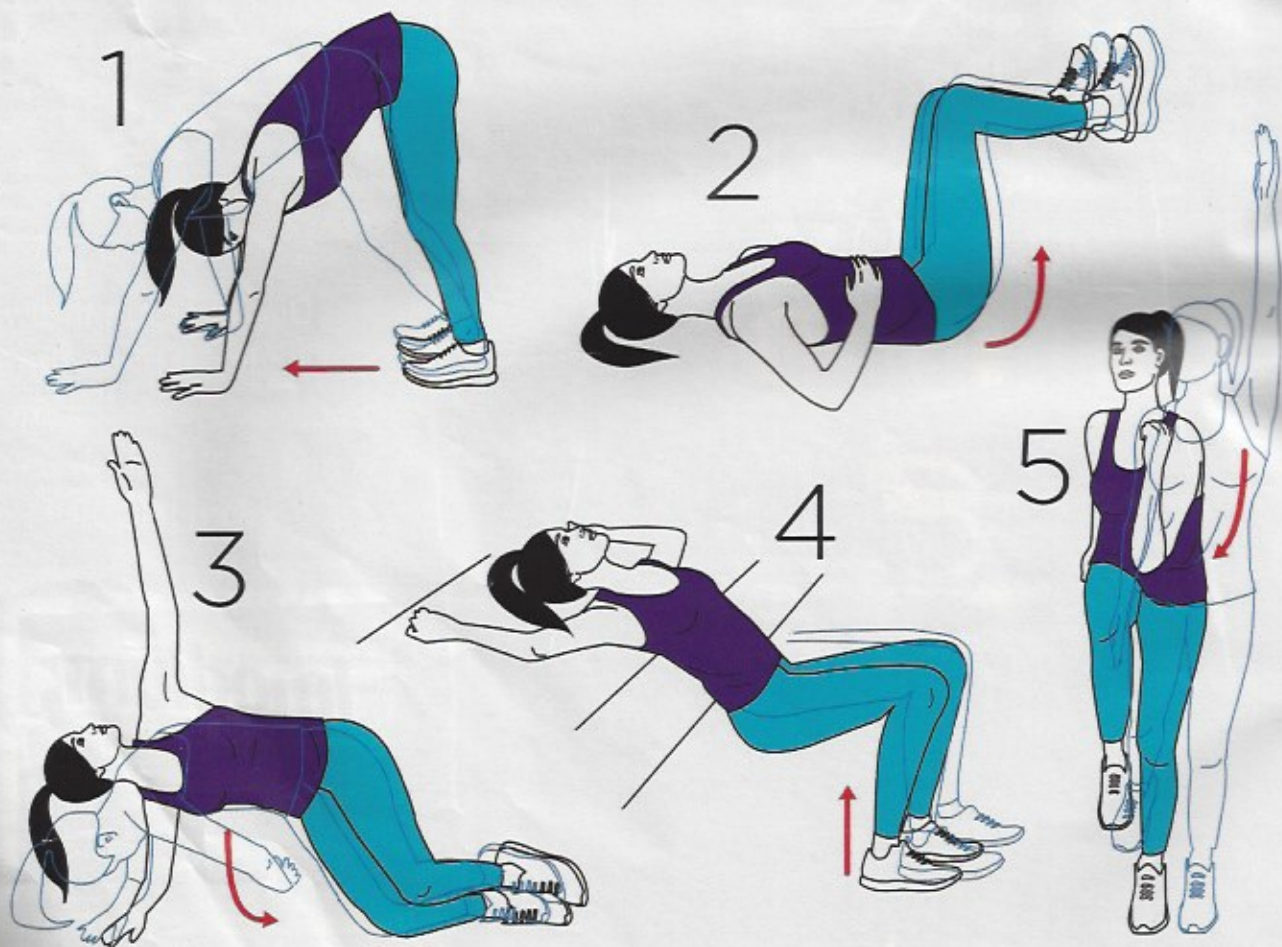
How to do it: (A) Rest shoulders and head on a couch, with arms resting in field-goal position. Fully exhale to hold your rib cage down. (B) Squeeze glutes,

hamstrings and abs to lift hips. Hold for a beat, then lower down to repeat. Do 10–20 reps.

5. Cross-Connect

What it does: Trains deeper glute and core muscles, elongates back muscles, opens rib cage and improves balance.

How to do it: (A) Stand with feet hip-width apart. Shift your weight onto one foot, bring the other knee up to hip level and take the opposite elbow across the body to touch the knee. (B) Reach your arm toward the ceiling while bringing the leg down and back behind you. Do 5–10 reps on each side.





Is a Standing Desk the Cure?

Simply trading all-day sitting for all-day standing won't undo posture problems—in fact, it could compound them, as your body tires, leans and droops. Your best bet is to change positions often, so you never settle into any one. This research-backed prescription,

created by Alan Hedge, PhD, ergonomics professor at Cornell University, does your body good by mixing things up every half hour.

SIT FOR 20 MINUTES

Practice good desk habits (see Sit Prettier, page 120). You'll be more productive on a computer when sitting vs. standing, but research says that after 20 minutes, your performance and concentration decline.

STAND FOR 8 MINUTES

Adjust the computer screen to eye level—or perform nonscreen work. Wear flat shoes and don't stay perfectly still; feel your weight shift around on your feet. Eight is enough—past 10 minutes, people tend to lean.

WALK FOR 2 MINUTES

Go grab some water, pick up printouts from the copier or even just pace in your area. It gets your blood flowing for increased brainpower.

Quick Posture Fixes

While chairs may be slouch central, your stance could probably use some work in other places too. For a neutral spine all the time, try these tips when...

STANDING IN LINE

"People tend to get lazy and lock their knees," Robertson says. Keep a soft bend while feeling your body balance on both feet and taking deep, core breaths. Shift subtly from side to side and forward and backward. "The body hates to be totally still," he says.

DRIVING YOUR CAR

Chances are your seat is too far back, says Steven Weiniger, DC, posture expert and author of *Stand Taller—Live Longer*, so you tilt yourself forward to reach the wheel or your lumbar spine collapses into the seat. Instead, angle the seat vertically so you sit taller and adjust the rearview mirror so you must sit up to see out of it.

CARRYING BAGS

When lugging around anything, aim for symmetry, keeping the weight as close to your center as possible. For your purse, cross-body bags and backpacks are better than shoulder straps. Split your groceries into two sacks or switch sides often.

WALKING OR RUNNING

Alternate the direction you follow on your favorite exercise routes. Constantly running at the same angle due to pavement slants can throw off your alignment.

LOUNGING IN THE LIVING ROOM

Even while relaxing, you can't just let your posture go. Change positions and get up regularly. If you're leaning back, be sure your lumbar spine and head are supported.

SLEEPING

Lying on your stomach can be a real pain in the neck, since your head has to be turned for breathing. Side or back sleep is better, with a pillow that keeps your head in alignment. Try one that's lobed; Weiniger suggests flipping it over for more gently contoured support. Avoid down or fill so soft your head sinks all the way in.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Tell your doctor about all your muscle or nerve conditions such as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, myasthenia gravis, or Lambert-Eaton syndrome, as you may be at increased risk of serious side effects including difficulty swallowing and difficulty breathing from typical doses of BOTOX®.

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you: have or have had bleeding problems; have plans to have surgery; have symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI) and are being treated for urinary incontinence. Symptoms of a urinary tract infection may include pain or burning with urination, frequent urination, or fever; have problems emptying your bladder on your own and are being treated for urinary incontinence; are pregnant or plan to become pregnant (it is not known if BOTOX® can harm your unborn baby); are breastfeeding or plan to (it is not known if BOTOX® passes into breast milk).

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Using BOTOX® with certain other medicines may cause serious side effects. **Do not start any new medicines until you have told your doctor that you have received BOTOX® in the past.**

Tell your doctor if you have received any other botulinum toxin product in the last 4 months; have received injections of botulinum toxin such as Myobloc®, Dysport®, or Xeomin® in the past (tell your doctor exactly which product you received); have recently received an antibiotic by injection; take muscle relaxants; take an allergy or cold medicine; take a sleep medicine; take aspirin-like products or blood thinners.

Other side effects of BOTOX® include: dry mouth, discomfort or pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, neck pain, and eye problems: double vision, blurred vision, decreased eyesight, drooping eyelids, swelling of your eyelids, and dry eyes. In people being treated for urinary incontinence other side effects include: urinary tract infection, painful urination, and/or inability to empty your bladder on your own. If you have difficulty fully emptying your bladder after receiving BOTOX®, you may need to use a disposable self-catheter to empty your bladder up to a few times each day until your bladder is able to start emptying again.

For more information refer to the Medication Guide or talk with your doctor.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please refer to the Summary of Information about BOTOX® on the following page.

The BOTOX® Savings Card is issued by Metropolitan Commercial Bank, member FDIC, pursuant to license by Visa USA, Inc. "Metropolitan Commercial Bank" and "Metropolitan" are registered trademarks of Metropolitan Commercial Bank © 2014. See the Cardholder Agreement for Terms and Conditions. By accepting, signing, or using this savings card, you agree to the Terms and Conditions of the Cardholder Agreement. This savings card will remain the property of the issuing institution and the privilege of its use may be withdrawn at any time.

© 2016 Allergan, Inc. Irvine, CA 92612. ® marks owned by Allergan, Inc. Dysport is a registered trademark of Ipsen Biopharm Limited. Myobloc is a registered trademark of Solstice Neurosciences, Inc. Xeomin is a registered trademark of Merz Pharma GmbH & Co. KGaA. *Based on 2014 data. Reference: Data on File, Allergan Inc.