

# Sitting Back

## *Back Fitness For People Who Sit*

If you're an office worker, a driver, a computer operator or a student, you're a person who spends a good portion of each day sitting. So why does your back ache? Frequently, back trouble is caused by poor posture and weak muscles--two conditions common of people who sit. You can take care of your back, and keep it fit, by using good posture and building strength and flexibility--while you sit.

### **Good Sitting Posture**

Your back has three curves--cervical (neck), thoracic (chest) and lumbar (lower back). All three curves should be aligned to keep your back in balance. Often, we slouch in our chairs or bend forward over our work, throwing these curves out of balance.

Try the following tips to support and balance your back while sitting. First, place a pillow (or rolled up towel) at the back of your chair seat to support your lower back. Angle the chair seat so your knees are slightly lower than your hips. Then, move your seat as close to your work as possible so you don't bend forward. Finally, angle your work (or your computer screen) so you can look straight ahead rather than down.

### **Strong, Flexible Muscles**

Try these exercises--they help build strong, flexible muscles to support your back. They also help relieve tension that can occur when you sit in one position for a long time. Each exercise takes only a few minutes and can be done while you sit. Try a few and feel the difference! (Note: Be sure your chair is stable before beginning these exercises and stop if you feel any discomfort.)

### **Sit Back And Relax**

Once you learn how to care for your back while you sit, you can sit back and relax, knowing that you're keeping your back healthy and strong. Sitting doesn't have to be a pain in the back if you keep fit while you sit.

Face forward. Slowly turn your head toward your shoulder, if possible, so you look over it. Return to center. Repeat 5 times. Then do the same in the other direction.



Sit as shown with feet flat on floor. With your hands on chair (or desk) for support, slowly raise your thighs a few inches above your chair seat. Repeat 5 times.



Clasp your hands behind your head and push your elbows back. Release the tension, then repeat 5 times.





Exhaling, slowly lean forward, drop head toward knees and let hands drop at ankles. Hold 5 seconds. Inhaling, unwind, slowly bringing up the head. Exhaling, stretch arms toward ceiling. Repeat 5 times.

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