

Fix Your Back Up

Posture plays a huge role in back and neck pain. If you can avoid bad habits in these danger zones you'll go a long way towards avoiding chronic low back pain.

Danger Zone 1: Driving

Slouching postures used when driving greatly increase the strain through the whole spine. Headaches and low back pain will result from prolonged poor positioning in the car seat.

The Remedy: Place a rolled up towel or cushion in the small of your back to improve the support of your lower back. Like any good structure, a solid foundation will lay the path for a sturdy frame. A strong lumbar spine will lead to correct posture in the thoracic and cervical regions of your spine as well.

The Bonus: Strain on your neck muscles can directly lead to increased blood pressure. Decreasing the strain through the back and neck will decrease your blood pressure and in turn decrease stress.

Danger Zone 2: At the Desk

Posture seems to go out the window here, particularly when your workplace is set up incorrectly. Computer screen glare and poor desk heights lead to slouching postures and strong strain through your neck.

The Remedy: Ensure your desk is at elbow height, hips and knees at 90°, feet flat on the ground. Have your computer screen perpendicular to windows to decrease glare. If you're still squinting, see an Optometrist.

The Bonus: Correct office set up decreases strain all over the body, particularly at the wrists. This reduces the risk of many over use and repetitive strain injuries of the hand.

Danger Zone 3: At the Bar

Bar stools in particular are harder on your back than playing leap frog with a sumo wrestler. Add into the mix a few drinks that tend to relax muscles and your posture can fall through the floor.

The Remedy: Sit forward and drop your knees so that your feet are on the footrest. Regularly change by having one cheek on the stool and one foot on the ground to decrease prolonged postures.

The Bonus: Sitting slumped forward shortens your chest muscles, sit up proud and show off your chest!

Danger Zone 4: On the Phone

Cradling a phone in your ear by using your shoulder leads to multiple posture problems, especially if you're trying to write or type at the same time.

The Remedy: Invest in a Bluetooth or wireless head set. Studies from California have shown they can decrease neck pain by 31%, back pain by 16%.

The Bonus: Upright posture opens up your vocal cords and projects your voice further. You'll sound stronger and more confident on the phone, leading to greater conversation dynamics.

Danger Zone 5: In Bed

Sleeping postures are ingrained from a young age, but small changes can make big differences. Sound sleepers may hold a static posture for up to 6 hours, greatly increasing strain in certain areas. Sleeping on your stomach forces you to face a different direction to your body for hours on end.

The Remedy: Buy a firm mattress and a proper pillow. Sleeping on your side with a pillow between your knees keeps your spine aligned and your pelvis level.

The Bonus: A happier partner. Sleeping on your side leads to a decrease in snoring in males (and some females), allowing your partner to sleep longer as well.