

Chapter 27 - Intermediate Thoracolumbar Paraspinal Muscles

In General

- Do not wear a wallet or carry things in your back pocket/s that may alter the way you sit.
- Use a pillow or other support (books or magazines) to balance a pelvis that is smaller on one side.
- If your physician has determined that you have a leg length difference on one side, then you should use a heel lift anytime you are up & about.
- If you sleep on your side, then sleeping with a pillow between your legs may be helpful.

Lifting



- It is extremely important to:
- Lift things with your body squared up to it & not in a twisted position
 - Bend from your knees and keep your back straight (with your pelvis tucked underneath you)
 - **It is even more important to lift with good form when you are tired, cold or are fatigued.**

Seated Stretch

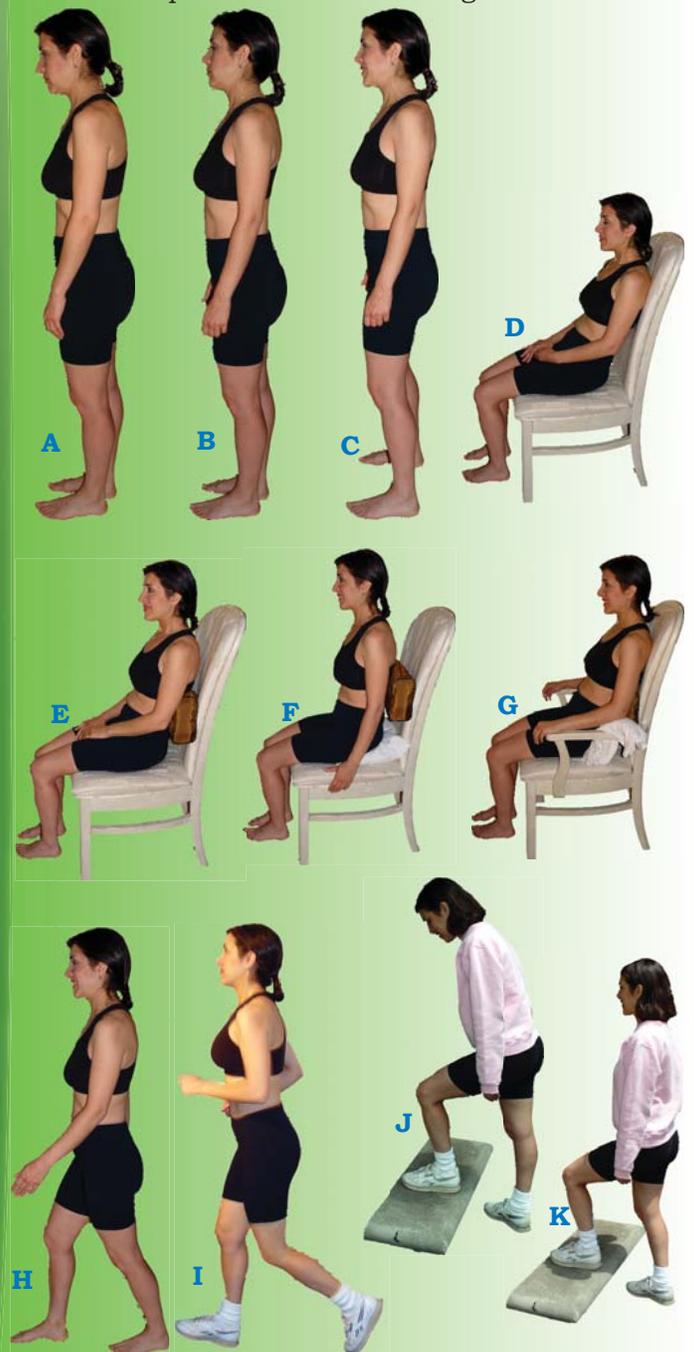


Sit in a chair and bend starting by just nodding your head, your neck (figure A) & try to feel every vertebra bend individually until you are full bent over with your hands beneath your arches (figure B). Take a few deep breaths & repeat 2-3 a sitting & 2-3 times a day.

Posture is always better if effort is made to elongate the body, as if a string suspended your crown from the sky.

- **Standing Posture:** A) Poor – stooped, head forward & shoulders rounded; B) Medium – head & shoulders are back; C) Good – head & shoulders are back, weight on the forefoot.
- **Seated Posture:** D) Poor – slumped, rounded shoulders, & head forward; E) Good – buttocks forward on chair with one foot placed behind; F) Good – a small wedge under the buttocks; G) Using a lumbar roll or support with arms supported by an armrest that doesn't draw the shoulders up.
- H) **Walking;** I) **Jogging;** & J) **Stairs** – all done as if suspended from the ceiling.

Postural Considerations



Side-lying Stretch

Start laying on one side, with your head supported by your hand & the other arm reaching behind you to hold on and counterbalance your leg, which is going to hang off the table, couch or bed. Your other leg is bent slightly at most upon the surface which you are laying:

1. Allow the weight of your top leg to twist your spine fully.
2. Lift the leg that is hanging slightly toward the ceiling while inhaling. (Figure A)
3. Exhale completely and allow the leg to drop again. When this muscle is fully stretched you should be able to touch the floor with your toe. The sequence is reversed to sit down.



Tennis Ball Acupressure



With yourself lying face up, place a tennis ball under your back where you have the discomfort, see figure. Roll around on the tennis ball to identify a single or many tender, pressure point/s. Once you find a pressure point allow the tennis ball to dwell on it and maintain a tolerable level of pressure. The tender point should diminish as the pressure is applied. Each tender point in this muscle can & should be treated in this way. Perform this release 3 times a day as needed.

Seated Stretch

This stretch can be performed anytime you have the time & you are able to sit. Follow this sequence:

1. Place a hand on top of your head.
2. Turn your body toward the side of your hand that is on your head & then reach your other hand around to that side, too (Figure A).
3. When you feel that you are forward bending, side bending & rotating as far as you can try to turn your head against your hand's resistance for 3-5 seconds (Figure B).
4. Upon relaxing your effort you should be able to forward bend, side bend & rotate further. Catch your breath & repeat this exercise 3-5 times at a sitting.

Perform this stretch 2-3 times a day.



A



B

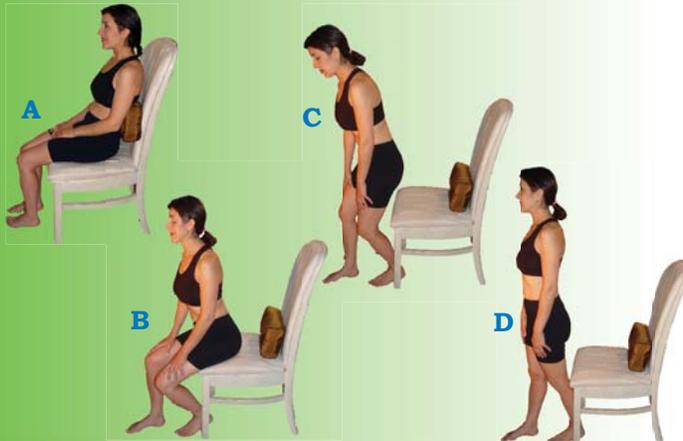
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Good Posture When Sitting Down & Standing Up

The key to good posture when sitting down & standing rests on maintaining your lumbar curve while in process! The following is the sequence necessary to stand up & maintain good alignment:

1. You are sitting comfortably in a chair with a good lumbar support.
2. You slide forward in your chair, but advance one butt cheek further than the other & a foot is placed beneath the front edge of the chair.
3. Maintain your lumbar curve while the knees & hips are straightened.
4. The standing position.

The sequence is reversed to sit down.

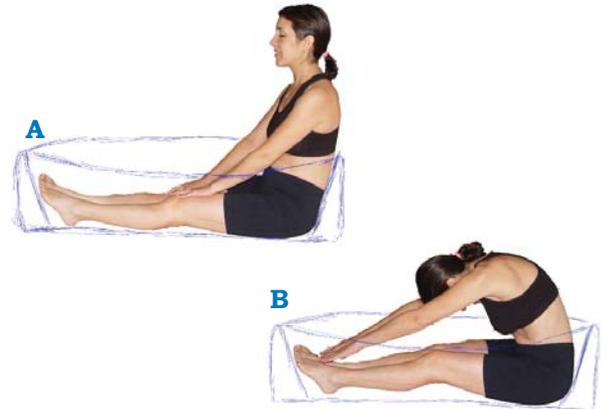


Bathtub Stretch

This stretch can be performed in the bathtub or just upon exiting the tub. Follow this sequence:

1. You are sitting comfortably in your bathtub.
2. Stretch forward & try to touch your toes, allowing your back to form a hump like a camel. Maintain this position for 3 deep breaths. Upon each exhalation allow yourself to stretch a bit further, if possible. Then, allow yourself to return to the starting position

Perform this stretch 1-2 times a day and repeat it 3-5 times each time you are in the tub.



This stretch can be performed anytime you have the time & there is enough soft, carpeted floor space. Follow this sequence:

1. While on your back & exhaling bring one knee toward your chest, as comfortably as you can. Hold it there for a 3 seconds and then slowly lower it and repeat the exercise on the other side. Continue to alternate sides for a total of 6 stretches on each side.
2. After completing the above and as you exhale, bring both knees to your chest at the same time. Hold them there for a 3 seconds and then slowly lower them.

Perform this stretch 2-3 times a day.

Floor Stretch



Strengthening Your Stomach with Sitbacks

Level 1

- Start with your knees bent & your arms straight out in front of you. Keep your back & neck straight (figure 1a).
- Sit back as far as possible without allowing your heels off the ground & maintaining a straight back (figure 1b). Hold this position for 2 deep breaths and then return to the start position. Repeat this exercise 5-7 times. Upon mastering it, you may move on to the next level.

Level 2 (figures 2a & 2b)

- This is the same exercise as level 1, but this time fold your arms across your chest. Upon mastering this level, you may move on to level 3.

Level 3 (figure 3a & 3b)

- This is same exercise as level 1, but this time place your clasped hands behind your neck. Upon mastering this level, you may move on to the next level.

Level 4 (figure 4a & 4b)

- This time keep your hands the same as in Level 3, but as you sit-back twist your spine so that your opposite elbow is over your knee. Do this in an alternating fashion for 5-7 times on each side.

