



THE SPINE COLUMN

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER FOR MVP MEMBERS

ISSUE 1, 2016

BACK TO WORK

Getting back to work with low back pain depends on what your day is usually like. But there are some basics that apply to everyone.

Moving keeps your back muscles strong, which can help your back. And avoiding activity for more than a day or two can make back pain worse.

READ MORE INSIDE [➔](#)



Back to Work continued.

At the Office

If you have a desk job:

- Adjust your chair so your feet are flat on the floor. If you can't do this, use a footrest so your feet can be flat.
- Keep the curve in your lower back. If your chair doesn't help, place a small cushion or rolled towel across the curve of your back.
- Keep reading materials at eye level. Avoid leaning over your desk.
- Avoid bending, leaning, or twisting at the waist. Keep your workstation and tools within easy reach.

Take Breaks and Mix It Up

- Take 10- to 15-second breaks. For example, look away from your computer monitor, stand up, or stretch your arms. Short breaks reduce eyestrain and muscle tension.
- Move around. When you are sitting, change your position often. Switch between standing and sitting, if possible.
- If you can, go for a walk. This can be as simple as walking up and down the hall. If possible, leave the building and walk a few blocks.
- Stretch your body. Get up out of your chair and stretch your arms, shoulders, back, and legs. When you are sitting, shrug and relax your shoulders. Do this at least every hour. It doesn't hurt to do it more!



MVP has online resources available 24 hours a day to help you take charge of your health. Make informed decisions about your health by using the Healthwise® Knowledgebase—our online Health Encyclopedia. Curious about the medications you take every day? Visit www.mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Live Healthy*, and then *Health Encyclopedia A to Z*—your one-stop resource for the latest health information.

Driving, Standing, Lifting

If you stand or are active in your job (for example, if you are a salesperson, delivery person, or landscaper), try the following:

- When driving, place a small, rolled-up towel or small cushion across the curve of your back. Take breaks. Pull over and walk around if your back begins to ache.
- When standing, put one foot on a low stool. Change feet throughout the day.
- Avoid heavy lifting and pulling. Ask someone for help if you need to. Instead of pulling, push if you can.

Work Smart

Be aware of your surroundings. Use common sense. Don't lift more than you need to, and don't carry loads farther than you have to. Take short breaks when your back starts to hurt. Watch for hazards to avoid falling down. These small things can make a big difference.

BACK PROBLEMS: PROPER LIFTING

No one is immune to having a back injury. Whether you have a strong back or have hurt your back before, it is well worth it to:

- **Stop** yourself before casually picking up a light or heavy load.
- **Plan** in your mind for the best way to lift what's in front of you. This could include enlisting help from one or more people.
- **Lift** and move slowly and carefully.

The time you take to use the right lifting mechanics is far less than the



(Continued on back page)

days, weeks, or months it can take to heal from a back injury.

How Can I Lift Without Hurting My Back?

Follow these basic rules to protect your back while lifting:

- **Keep a wide base of support.** Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other (karate stance).
- **Squat down,** bending at the hips and knees only. If needed, put one knee to the floor and your other knee in front of you, bent at a right angle (half kneeling).
- **Maintain good posture.** Look straight ahead, and keep your back straight, your chest out, and your shoulders back. This helps keep your upper back straight while maintaining a slight arch in your lower back.

MVP Health Care offers a condition health management program for members living with chronic back pain. For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement's (ICSI) health care guidelines for the treatment of adult low back pain.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Health Insurance Company of New Hampshire, Inc.; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

Contact Us

For more information, call **1-866-942-7966**
Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm.

TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

WE VALUE YOUR OPINION

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at **www.mvplistsens.com**. We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100 percent confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

- **Slowly lift** by straightening your hips and knees (not your back). Keep your back straight, and don't twist as you lift.
- **Hold the load** as close to your body as possible, at the level of your belly button.
- **Use your feet** to change direction, taking small steps.
- **Lead with your hips** as you change direction. Keep your shoulders in line with your hips as you move.
- **Set down** your load carefully, squatting with the knees and hips only.

©1995–2015 Healthwise, Incorporated.

www.healthwise.org. Reprinted with permission for personal use only. Content shall not be further distributed. This information does not replace the advice of a doctor. Healthwise disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.

QUICK TIPS FOR BEING PREPARED TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered.
- Bring a “health history” list with you, and keep it up to date.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at **www.mvphealthcare.com**.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

