



Tips for Proper Body Mechanics

In order to decrease your risk of spinal fractures or other back injury, it is important to learn how to move your body in a safe manner. Learning how to get in and out of bed, pick up items off the floor, and perform your everyday activities without placing added stresses on your spine is essential. This is done by moving your body while maintaining your spine in good postural alignment. When you do this, you are utilizing good body mechanics for spine protection. With osteoporosis, it is especially important to avoid bending forward and twisting at your spine. These movements increase the compressive forces through the spine, and increase your risk for fractures.

Getting in and out of bed

- Avoid twisting while getting in and out of bed. When lying down, first roll onto your side, then onto your back using log rolling technique. Bend both knees and roll, moving knees, hips and shoulders together.
- To sit up, roll using the log rolling technique, lowering legs off bed and using your arms to push upper body into sitting position. Remember to avoid twisting and bending.



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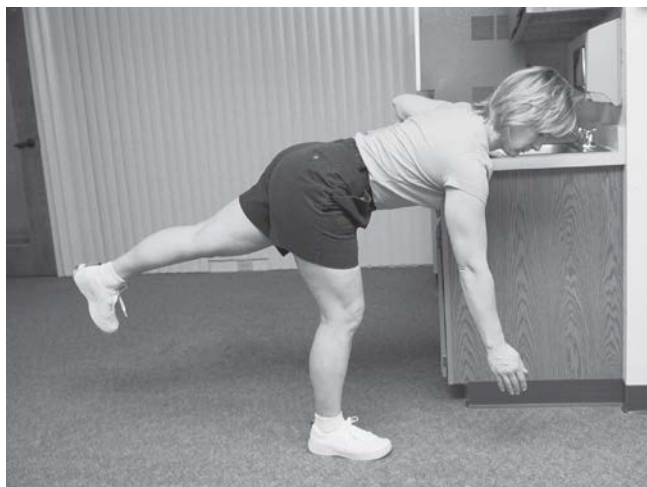
Getting in and out of chairs

- To stand up, scoot to front of the seat; bend or “hinge” forward from the hips while keeping proper spinal alignment; push with your legs and come to stand. Keep chest lifted.
- To sit down, keep good postural alignment (chest lifted up), bend knees and “hinge” hips to sit on the front edge of the seat. Scoot back in the chair.
- You can either place hands on armrests or on your thighs.
- Avoid compressive forces by not allowing your spine to bend when completing these movements.



Reaching

- When reaching overhead, use one hand and have one foot in front of the other. Shift your weight forward onto your front leg as you reach.
- A reaching device can be useful, but use it to lift only lightweight objects and keep spine erect.
- To minimize excessive bending and reaching, reorganize work areas (such as kitchen, closet, hobby room) so that items used regularly are stored at mid-body heights (at levels between your head and knees).



Pushing/pulling

- Never try to push or pull heavy objects (i.e., furniture).
- Face your work.
- Always avoid bending or twisting when you push or pull.
- Keep arms close to your body.
- Use legs with knees bent to shift weight side to side, forward or backwards.
- Maintain proper postural alignment at all times.
- Common push/pull tasks include vacuuming, sweeping and mopping.



Lifting

- Place feet apart to keep you steady.
- Face your work to avoid twisting in the spine.
- Keep object close to your body.
- Keep spine erect/maintain the normal spinal curves. Tighten your abdominals.
- Use your legs. Bend your hips and knees. Never bend forward from your spine.
- Hinge from your hips when you have to move your trunk forward, maintaining normal spinal curves.
- Squeeze your buttocks and push with your legs as you lift, while maintaining normal spinal curves.
- When picking up an item from the floor, squat down, bring the object in close to your body and stand up while maintaining the normal curves of your spine.
- Never lift heavy objects.
- If you do not know your lifting limit, consult your doctor or physical therapist.
- These lifting tips apply to all tasks (reaching, pushing, pulling, and all mobility). If you follow these principles, you will automatically use good body mechanics every time.



Dressing

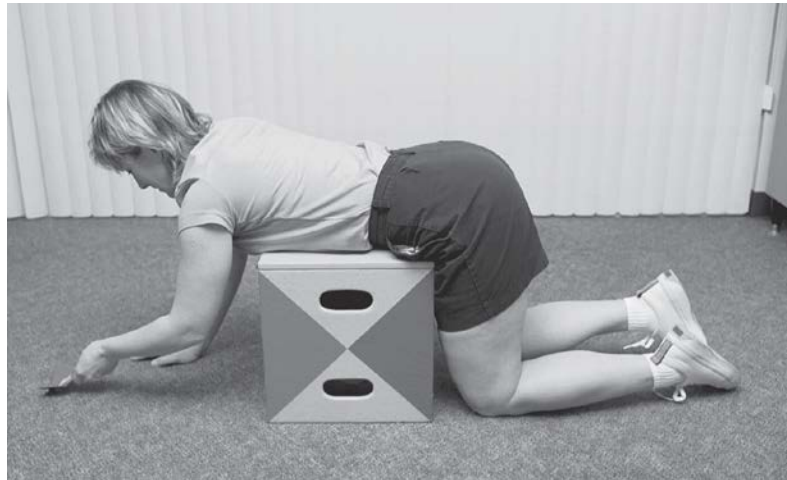
- As in all activities, the goal is to keep the spine aligned in the normal postural curves.
- It is important to avoid bending forward at your spine when dressing your lower body. This requires you to hinge at your hips.
- Adaptive equipment such as a long handled shoe horn and sock aide are available to assist if proper mechanics are not possible.



Household activities



Gardening



Coughing/sneezing

