



The Lighter Side of Sitting, Standing, Lifting and Stretching

Information provided courtesy of



PREVENTION PLUS, INC.
Innovative Injury Prevention and Management Products and Services

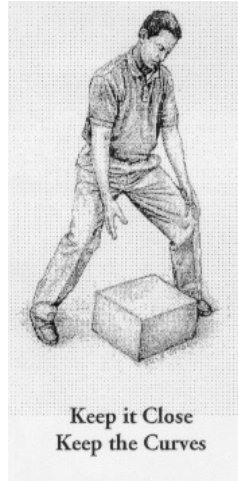
15083 Bridgewater Drive Savage, MN 55378, 612-940-3242, www.energizedapproach.com

The Lighter Side of Lifting

There is no “**right way**” to lift. However, there are less demanding ways to **lift**.

Keep it close/Keep the curves

curves: The closer a load is kept to your center of gravity the easier it is to keep the natural curves of your back. When the spine is in the three natural curves, the vertebrae, discs, ligaments and muscles are in their strongest and most supportive position.



Build a Bridge: In most cases the demands of any lift are determined by position of the lifters upper body during the lift. Many people lift by bending over at the waist, leaving their upper body hanging like a “one-sided bridge”. This places all the demands of the lift onto the lower back. To minimize this load people can support their upper body weight by “building a bridge”. This is accomplished by supporting the upper body with one arm on a leg or other stationary object. If a support structure is not available, simply step forward toward the load with one leg and create a “bridge” with your legs that will reduce the demands on the back. If you bend over and don’t feel weight on a forward arm or a forward leg....it’s on your back!



Moving your **feet first** gets you closer to the load and reduces the amount you have to reach. The farther you reach, the more you end up lifting your upper body as well as the load. Moving your feet first also helps reduce the risk of twisting while you lift.

The Art of Standing

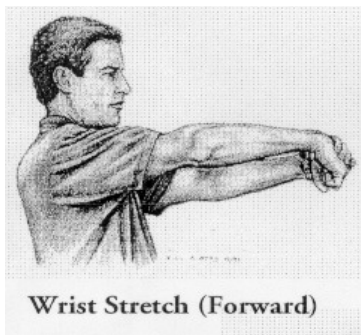
There is no “right way” to stand, however, there are certainly “less demanding ways” to perform this task.

1. **Staggered Stance:** Too often people stand with their legs and feet in-line with each other. This creates a narrow base of support for the upper body. By staggering the stance a person is able to build a bridge of support underneath the upper body. This allows a person to shift their weight with his legs, not his back.
2. **Bend the Knees Slightly:** Bending the knees slightly “activates” the muscle (the shock absorbers) in the legs. When the legs are “locked out” (held perfectly straight), the muscles in the legs tend to relax, increasing the demands on the back. This also increases the tendency for fluid to pool in the legs. Simply by putting a slight bend in the knees, the legs will absorb most of the pressure that would go onto the back and circulation in the legs is improved.
3. **Get a Foot Up!:** When people stand for prolonged periods there is a tendency for the upper body weight to shift either out in front of their legs, or slightly behind. This means that the weight of the upper body is now outside of the center of gravity and must be lifted or held up by the structures of the back, rather than the legs. Simply by elevating one foot on a rail or other elevated surface helps the legs move back underneath the upper body and takes a great deal of work off of the back.
4. **Move:** The human body is designed to move. The primary reason our bodies become stiff and sore when we are standing is because our bodies are trying to get us to move! If a person stands with a staggered stance and the slight bend in the knees he/she can easily shift the weight in a variety of directions. Rocking up and down on the toes periodically drives fluids up from the legs and keeps the legs fresh.

The Art of Sitting

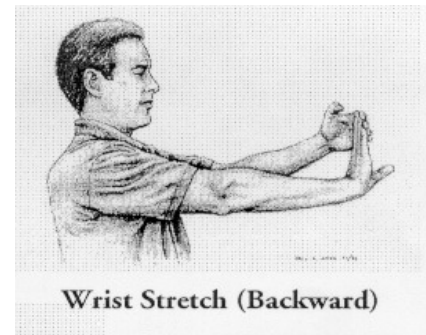
There is no “right way” to sit! However, there are ways to make sitting less demanding.

1. **Movement** – almost any position can be tolerated for a limited amount of time without negative effects on the body. The key is to make frequent minor postural adjustments throughout the day. People have forgotten how important it is to move and it is taking a toll on their bodies.
2. **Use all of a chairs features.** Adjustable chairs are designed to be adjusted, not only to fit your body, but also to change positions from time to time. Periodically raise the chair slightly or reposition the seat pan or back rest.
3. **Find more than one way to perform the same job.** If you are going to stop for a few seconds and think about something, try standing while you think. If you are going to make a phone call and don't need your work surface, stand and talk or walk around your office if you have a headset. Periodic standing and change of position improves circulation and reduces overall fatigue while allowing you to remain comfortable and productive.
4. **Sit so that your body is able to move efficiently.** Position yourself and your work so that your head is supported by your spine, your shoulders are able to move efficiently within the shoulder joint (rather than being lifted), your back is able to relax into its natural curves and your feet are able to rest on a solid surface. While frequent movement is essential, most people don't move frequently enough. For this reason the positions people choose need to minimize the demands on the body.
5. **Set up for Neutral.** Whenever you get ready to work, position yourself so that you are in neutral positions and then make minor adjustments with your workstation to accommodate your posture.



The Art of Stretching

1. Let your body know what's coming



2. Let your body breathe!

3. Remember the rule of opposites

