

Back pain common for cubicle workers

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, back injuries account for one of every five injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

Tired of your aching back? Here are some tips on how to best avoid experiencing back pain while on the job:

Be aware: Give yourself posture checkups when sitting at your desk.

"Are your shoulders rounded and is your tummy protruding?" says Marilynn Larkin, a certified personal trainer and fitness instructor in New York. "See whether you feel as though you're in your comfort zone when you have poor posture."

Once you're aware that your posture is off, take action and correct the problem.

"Roll your shoulders back and down, lift your chest and tuck your chin to lengthen your neck and keep it in line with your spine," says Larkin. "Correct how you are sitting or standing. Your hips should be in line with your knees while making a 90-degree angle with the floor. Also, your feet should be planted firmly on the floor."

Make a checklist: Jot down the activities that you do during a workday that might put you at risk for back pain. These can be anything from holding the phone with one shoulder while typing on a keyboard to reaching up high for papers on a shelf.

"Once you've done that, decide what you can do instead to avoid these actions," says Larkin.

Accessorize: There are a few items you can look into acquiring that can help you with back pain. Susan Berman Hammer, president and owner of Susan Berman Associates, a public relations firm in Highland Park, Ill., says a special kind of pillow can be helpful.

"Place a small Tempur-Pedic pillow between your lower back and the chair," she says. "You can also use a removable head rest from your car or a rolled towel instead."

Hammer also suggests purchasing a footrest to elevate your feet under your desk.



► Back problems? Get a posture check up.

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