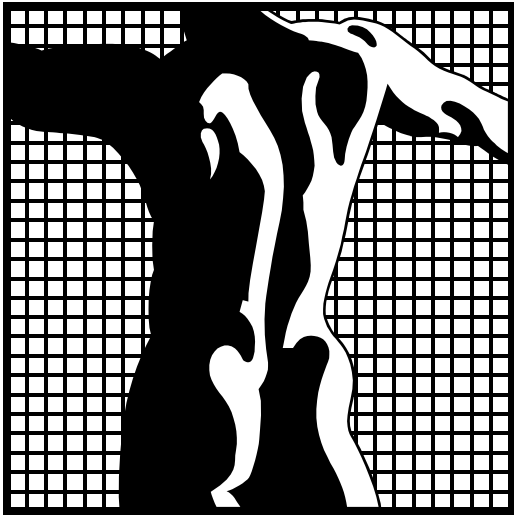


## Tips to Save Your Back



The muscles, ligaments and disks of your back do a big job supporting your spine and moving the weight of your body. Good posture, exercise and correct body mechanics help keep it flexible and strong. Massage can help with posture by stretching shortened muscles and fascia (the connective tissue that surrounds your muscles and other tissues), freeing movement around the joints, and relieving muscle contractions that can pull you out of alignment.

Help protect your back by moving with a little thought. Here are some tips to help you move correctly.

1. Spread your feet shoulder-width apart for stability when moving or working. Stand evenly on your two feet.
2. Practice feeling your center of gravity in your abdomen. Many people try to move from their upper bodies, which is less efficient than moving from your pelvis, hips, and abdomen. Many times back pain can be minimized by strengthening your abdominal muscles, so try perform strengthening exercises for your abdomen several times a week. This can be done by taking classes, such as abs or Pilates classes, or by asking for advice from an exercise instructor or specialist.
3. To pick up a load, stand close to it. Squat and use your legs to lift it, keeping your back upright and the object close to your body. Avoid twisting as you lift.
4. Kneel down on one knee to retrieve something from the floor.
5. When reaching for an object overhead, keep your shoulders and hips facing it – don't twist.