

Proper performance of **ACTIVITY OF DAILY LIVING**

Understanding the what's and why's of posture is covered in the handout: **What's all this about POSTURE.** This handout will address how to apply those principles to common activities of daily living. Both handouts may be downloaded at www.ElmenhurstChiro.com under Health Tips.

LIFTING

- Align your body with the object to be lifted.
- Bend at your knees and hips when lowering your body. Keep your back straight, as if a pole were running from your head to rear. Avoid twisting your trunk when grasping the object.
- Once you have grasped the object, if bending forward from the hips (not back) then resume an upright posture before rising. **RISE WITH YOUR LEGS, NOT YOUR BACK.**
- Keep the object to be lifted as close to your body as possible.

SITTING ACTIVITIES

Maintain an upright posture without shifting (as with leaning into an armrest) or twisting (as with turning your upper body toward the TV or person you are visiting with).

Computer

- Have your monitor at eye level. If using a laptop, set it on a stand (or books or a box) and use a bluetooth keyboard and mouse.
- If using two monitors don't hold your head turned for more than several seconds at a time. Rather, turn your entire body so you are lined up with the monitor you are using.
- With continuous use of a mouse rest your arm on the chair arm or desk.
- If working at a standing desk all of the above recommendations apply.
- Adjust your seat height so your elbows are roughly 90⁰ and your wrist are fairly straight.
- If arm rests are available, adjust to rest your elbows where they naturally fall when holding your chest up. Arm rests that are too low will cause you to hunch forward.

Desk/craft work

- When needing to work at desk level (as with writing or sewing) have your work surface as high as possible (maybe an island rather than table or resting your work on a pillow or two on your lap) and/or lower your seat.
- Position what you are working with as far away from you as comfortable, rather than close to your body.
- When looking down avoid rounding your low back, lowering your chest, or hanging your head forward. Rather, pivot forward from your hips to keep your spine relatively straight and keep your head over your shoulders as much as possible.
- When having to look down, take frequent breaks and stretch your neck and head backward and up (or the opposite of the position of stress) and roll your shoulder backward

Telephones

- If you need to free your hands, use a headset.

Reading / tablets / phones

- Stack pillows and/or a box on your lap so that your arms are resting and your object of attention is in your line of sight while keeping your head over your shoulders.
- Using a book stand is helpful when reading larger books.

Reclining

- Reclining is a good position as long as you don't round your back or let your head come forward. Most recliners require additional lumbar support, and some force your head forward. Using a neck roll often times remedies this design flaw.
- If watching TV, don't recline to the point that your head needs to be forward to view the screen. Having a TV mounted high on the wall or using a high TV stands allows further reclining.

STANDING ACTIVITIES

Keep your chest up and your shoulders hanging freely. When having to look down, tilt your head without dropping your chest and rounding your back.

Working over a counter

- Choose a work surface with a height that doesn't require you to round or bend your back. If your work surface is too low try different ways to lower yourself: sit on a stool or chair, stand with your feet spread apart, or bend your knees and pivot at your hips (not your back).
- Having your project (and hands) close to your body requires you to look down, which leads to a rounded posture. Pushing your project further away from your body reduces this risk.

Yardwork and housework

- With raking, shoveling, sweeping and vacuuming keep your back straight and head over your shoulders. Bend and rise up with your legs. Step as far forward as you like but **REACH ONLY AS FAR AS YOUR ARMS WILL ALLOW WITHOUT TWISTING OR BENDING YOUR TRUNK.**
- With repetitive work like raking, we usually have a stronger side, but continue to switch back and forth between your strong side and weak side.

GROUND LEVEL ACTIVITIES

With working at or near the ground or floor (planting, weeding, dusting, etc.), avoid bending over with straight legs.

- For continuous work, getting on your hands and knees is a good position for your back, but be cautious not to over reach and cause twisting of your trunk.
- When needing to reach to ground level for isolated tasks, use the golfers bend lift. This is accomplished by extending one leg back, pivot forward from your hips while keeping your back straight and head aligned over your shoulders.
- Another option to reach the ground for isolated tasks is to drop to one knee and again pivot forward from the hips to keep head and back aligned.

LYING DOWN TO READ

- Lying on your stomach propped up on your elbows and with pillows under your chest will work for short periods. Side lying can also work for shorter periods.
- Lying on your back with your head propped is a significant stressor and should be avoided.

