



Working **WELL**

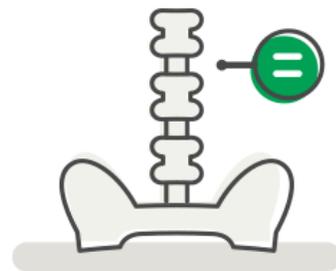
Working Well is a monthly email series from CDPHP featuring health and wellness tips for CDPHP members and non-members. This edition focuses on back health. Feel free to forward this email to your employees to help them live their healthiest lives.

Keep your spine happy and healthy

Five Tips for Avoiding Back Pain

According to the American Chiropractic Association, as much as 80 percent of the population will experience back pain at some point in their lives. Take a look at a few of the ways you can keep your back healthy and strong at any age.

Check your mattress and pillows. Laying down allows the structures in your spine to relax and rejuvenate. To make the most of this time, you need a mattress and pillows that allow you to rest in a comfortable way. A firm or medium-firm mattress generally



provides better support than an old or soft mattress that can cause your spine to sag.

If you're a back sleeper, place a pillow under your knees to reduce stress in the lower back. If you're a side sleeper, you can benefit from a pillow between your knees to keep your hips balanced. A neck pillow can also help the upper spine.

Exercise your core. Your core muscles – in your lower back and abdomen – need to be strong in order to support your spine and take pressure off your lower back. These muscles can be toned through targeted exercises. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Wear proper shoes. Whether you're running for sport or walking to the mailbox, your shoes play an important role in supporting your lower back and keeping your spine aligned. Your heel should be snug but not overly tight. Shoes should be replaced once they get worn out. Orthopedics or inserts can provide additional support.

Adjust your backpack. To prevent injury while wearing a backpack, use both shoulder straps and tighten them to keep the backpack close to your back. Heavier items should be placed in the pack first. Avoid overstuffing your backpack with too much weight, which can cause you to lean forward into an unnatural position, resulting in the back, neck, and shoulder pain.

Watch how you sit. The discs in your lower spine are loaded more while sitting than standing, so long periods of sitting can create or aggravate a painful back condition. Plus, when you're sitting at a desk and looking at a computer screen, the natural tendency is to slouch and lean forward, stressing the lumbar discs even more. Use a new office chair and practice

good posture to support the natural curves of your back.

Get a massage. A good back massage has many benefits, including increased blood flow, loosening tight muscles, and promoting relaxation. While it's not the same as going to a massage therapist, having a massage chair in your home can be an easy way to enjoy some of the benefits.

To learn more about back pain and how to prevent it, check out these resources from the [National Institutes of Health](#).

CDPHP members

Learn more about back health by logging in to your [member account](#) and taking the “What You Need to Know About Back Health” program in CaféWell. Not familiar with CaféWell? This digital wellness platform gives you personalized activities and challenges to meet your health goals. Log into your CDPHP member account and click on the CaféWell box to get started.