



Posture during the Post-Natal Period



After your baby is born it can take between 3 and 6 months for the joints in the pelvis and low back to return to normal, if you are breastfeeding this time may be increased due to raised hormone levels.

Therefore it is important to practice good posture and to take care when bending, lifting and twisting in the first 6 months.

Protect your back

Consider the following suggestions:

Try not to carry your baby by supporting him/her on your hip. This causes your pelvis to twist, and can result in low back and sacroiliac pain.

Try using a sling when you will be carrying your baby a lot, this way the baby's weight is held centrally and the pressure is distributed evenly across your shoulders.

Make sure that your changing table is at a suitable height so you are not leaning over, position nappies and clothes in convenient positions so you don't need to twist or reach too much.



When feeding your baby:

Support your baby and your arm on a pillow. Consider using a specially designed nursing pillow to position yourself comfortably while breastfeeding.

Avoid sitting with rounded shoulders and leaning over the baby.



Kneel next to the bathtub when bathing a toddler.

When talking to a child, bend at the knees and get down instead of bending over.

Strategies for lifting, bending and moving

You are more prone to back strain after giving birth, because the pregnancy hormones have softened your ligaments and joints. The following strategies will help minimize your risk of back injuries.

Lifting and moving

Any time you need to reach or lift low objects, spread your feet apart with one foot in front of the other and bend your knees.

Bring the object close to you as you straighten your knees and lift. This allows you to use the thigh muscles for lifting instead of straining your back muscles.

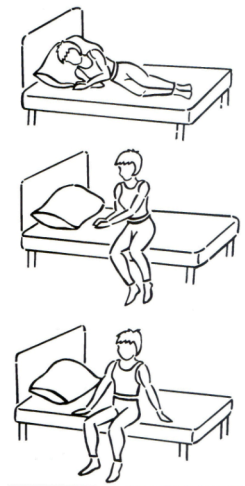


When moving an object, try to push instead of pull. Use your legs, not your back and arms.

Bending

Avoid any position where you bend at the waist with your knees straight, even if it is only a slight bend this puts strain on the sacroiliac joints. Instead, alter your position so that you are sitting, squatting, kneeling or bending at the knees while leaning forward at the hips.

When getting in or out of a bed or a car, turn your hips and back in the same direction while keeping your back straight. When getting out of bed, first roll to your side, and then use your arms to push up from the bed.



Maintaining a healthy posture while standing

Maintain the pelvic tilt at all times, this habit will help to retrain spinal muscles and ease stress on the lumbar spine.

Contract your abdominal muscles to act as a natural "corset" for your lower back.

Keep your chin tucked in. Your ears should be in a straight line with your shoulders.

Avoid standing in one position for long periods of time. (I don't know many mothers who have the chance to do this anyway...)

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