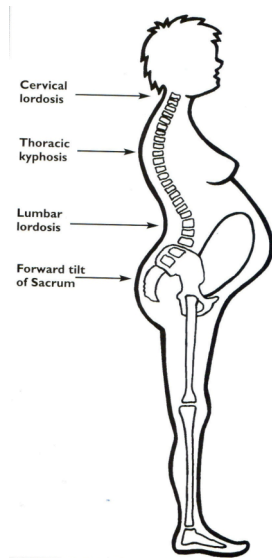




Posture during Pregnancy



One of the most important contributions to a healthy pregnancy is good posture. Proper alignment can decrease low back and neck pain and fatigue. These guidelines will help you maintain a healthy posture throughout your pregnancy when standing, sitting and lying down.

The effect of pregnancy on your body's alignment

During pregnancy several things occur that work against maintaining correct spinal alignment. Firstly, the increasing weight of the baby causes your lumbar curve to increase as your center of gravity shifts forward. To compensate for this the thoracic and cervical curves also shift to balance the lumbar curve. Although these are all natural adaptations by the body they can result in joint and muscle pain.

In addition, your abdominal muscles become stretched as the baby grows. These muscles are less able to contract and support your lower back. Hormone levels increase during pregnancy and cause joints and ligaments to loosen, allowing malalignments to occur more easily.

Maintaining a healthy posture while standing

Maintain the pelvic tilt at all times, so that your lower back does not sway forward.

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.

Avoid high heels, as they cause your body weight to shift forward even more. Wear low heeled shoes, preferably with some arch support.

When doing any task where you are standing for a long period of time, such as ironing or doing dishes, put one foot up on a step stool or sit on a high stool. This will decrease the sway in your lower back.

Maintaining a healthy posture while sitting

Maintain the pelvic tilt and avoid slouching.

Sit into a chair so that the length of your thighs are supported by the chair.

Sit so your knees are level with, or slightly below your hips.

Do not cross your legs. This position decreases circulation, and can result in pelvic malalignment.

In the third trimester you may find sitting on a gym ball comfortable, this keeps the low back in good alignment and can relieve pelvic pain.

Maintaining a healthy posture while lying on your side

Lying on your side is a good position to take stress off your lower back without reducing the blood flow to the placenta and your baby.

Place a pillow between your legs to support the weight of your top leg and decrease low back strain.

A pillow under your abdomen will help support the weight of your uterus.

Place a pillow behind you for back support.

Maintaining a healthy posture while lying on your back

Avoid lying on your back for long periods of time after the first trimester. The weight of the baby and your uterus can compress the large blood vessels and reduce the blood flow and oxygen to the placenta and baby.

If you do lie on your back, elevate your head and place a pillow under your knees, or keep your knees bent in order to tilt your pelvis and flatten your back.

www.homechiropractor.co.uk sallyscott@homechiropractor.co.uk