

Four Resolutions for a Healthier Back in 2008

Eat more vegetables. Stress less. Take the kids out to the park more often. You may already have a long list of resolutions for 2008. This year, honor your spine, too. With the help of your doctor of chiropractic, these simple steps can promote a healthier back in 2006.

Consider replacing your pillow or mattress.

Do you wake up with aches and pains? It could be time to purchase a new mattress or pillow. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) recommends finding a mattress that evenly supports your whole body. There should be no gaps between you and the mattress when you lie down. When choosing a pillow, select one that supports your head and neck in alignment with the rest of the spine, whether you sleep on your side or back. Keep in mind that what works for your partner may not work for you—there isn't one mattress or pillow that fits everyone. Simple adjustments, such as adding foam padding, can help tremendously.

Re-evaluate your posture at work.

Americans spend an average of 44 hours at work every week—often behind a desk. To avoid poor posture that can lead to tension, back pain, and joint problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome, check that your chair is the right size and adjusted correctly, says the ACA. Do your feet rest comfortably on the ground? Does the chair offer lumbar support? Are you able to tilt or swivel easily while performing tasks at your desk? Also, be sure you have adequate light (so that you aren't straining to see documents or a computer screen), adjust your computer monitor so that it is at eye level, and wear a headset for longer telephone conversations. And don't forget to take frequent breaks and stretch throughout the day.

Learn how to lift correctly.

Improper lifting of items such as luggage, backpacks or briefcases, storage boxes, or even groceries causes many back injuries. But knowing how to lift properly can prevent serious injury. First and foremost, don't bend from the waist. Keep your back straight, and squat to reach the item. Then, keep it close to your body as you lift, and avoid twisting motions. When traveling, check all bags that weigh more than 10 percent of your body weight.

Eat right and exercise well.

Eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise helps your body stay toned and tension-free—and promotes a healthy weight and a happier spine. Smart exercise and a good diet can also prevent osteoporosis, which affects over 20 million American women. To start, the ACA recommends eating out at restaurants less (to reduce the amount of unhealthful fats and sugars you consume) and adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your diet. Aim for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes of exercise, three or four days a week.

Chiropractic Care Can Help...

Our goal is to adjust the spine and help stimulate your body's natural healing process.