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BODY MECHANICS

Many injuries and sources of pain are caused by poor body mechanics. How we lift objects, and how we sit at desks and computers can put undue stress on our muscles and joints. Besides poor lifting techniques, lifting excessive weight, obesity, poor conditioning, tight muscles and previous injuries can lead to new injuries. There are three steps when lifting that can prevent injuries: 1. ask yourself if the load is too heavy by testing it or observing its contents – if so GET HELP; 2. try using mechanical help such as dollies, pulleys, carts, wheelbarrows, etc.; 3. if possible, can you separate the load taking a little at a time.

If you decide you can handle the task, stand close to the object, feet 12-18 inches apart, and preferably one foot slightly in front of the other. Keeping your back straight with a slight inward curve of the lower back, tighten the abdominal muscles, and bend your knees to lower your body to reach the object. Do not straighten your knees just before lifting, you want your legs to help lift the object. Locking your knees will cause your back to do the work and that could cause pain or injury. The muscles on the front of your thigh (quadriceps), and buttock muscles (gluteal) will be the prime movers. Keeping your head up will also help your alignment. Always move your feet, rather than twisting to move an object from one place to another. Don't "jerk" the weight. Concentrate on your lifting technique!

Long periods of sitting at desks and computers often result in neck, shoulder and arm pain. Taking a brief break two to three times per hour by simply standing up, rotating your shoulders and upper back, and moving your head will promote muscle relaxation. When sitting at a computer, the low back should be supported. If the chair doesn't have lumbar support, a folded towel or small pillow could be substituted behind the lower back. The top of the monitor should be no higher than the top of your head. To avoid vision problems, adjust the distance of the monitor. With your shoulders relaxed and your elbows bent no more than 90 degrees, your hands can rest comfortably on the keyboard. Always remember to have a wrist support in front of the keyboard. Keep the mouse close by. When reaching for a phone or other desk equipment, turn the chair or get up in order to perform the task.

Following these tips while working at desk jobs or lifting large objects may prevent injuries and unnecessary stress on your back and neck.

To learn more about posture and body mechanics contact Results Physical and Occupational Therapy for a free screening. **Results will offer FREE screenings at both locations for the month of March. Appointments must be made so please call ahead, Bangor 992-4042 and Dexter 924-0077**

PATIENTS RESULTS

*"My posture has improved and I am more conscious of trying to stand up straight and not slumping when seated. The exercises given here have improved my muscles and generally, **I feel Better!** I know that my problems and pain were caused by bad posture and not enough exercise. Looking better is positive for your mental health and a good outlook on life!!" -D.C.*



IMPORTANT DATES

March 5 **Fibromyalgia** in-service at 5pm
Learn more about the benefits of Physical Therapy.

March 28 **Study Skills Workshop**
This workshop will be great for educators and parents! Come and learn about the barriers to study that are preventing children from really learning! 1:00-2:30 pm.

April 8 **Easing Handwriting Headaches**
Does your child have a messy or awkward approach to handwriting? Come and find out some underlying causes and ways to help! Starts at 5:30 pm.

Call 992-4042 for more information or to sign up for any of the FREE in-services or workshops this month!
(all events will be at the Bangor clinic)

The Misspelled Word Game Is Back!

Once you find the misspelled word call the Bangor office at 992-4042. If you correctly identify the word you will be entered to win our monthly prize. This month the prize will be a \$10.00 movie pass. Good luck and happy searching! Winner will be drawn on March 27th.