



Back health

Spinal Health Week (24 - 31 May 2021) raises awareness about spinal health and how poor posture can affect a person's life.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019 report 'Back problems' estimates 70-90% of people will have back pain at some point in their life, and it is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

Sitting for extended periods of time whilst slouched can affect our back health and our overall wellbeing. For many of us, this relates to sitting in vehicles or at computers for most of our working day. Spinal Health Week encourages people to become more aware of their posture and to exercise regularly to prevent health problems later in life.

Effects of poor posture include:



Back pain



Joint and muscles disorders



Fatigue



Headaches



Rounded/hunched shoulders

It is important to try and maintain good posture at work, especially considering how many hours we spend there. Maintaining good posture can help prevent visits to a doctor, physiotherapist or chiropractor. In many cases, good posture and regular exercise can prevent the symptoms of pre-existing health conditions becoming worse. Good posture is crucial for optimal body function.



Here are some tips to protect your back:

▶ Stay active

Aim for a combination of stretching, strengthening and aerobic exercise throughout the week.

▶ Invest in an ergonomic chair

Slouching forward while working at a desk places excessive pressure on the discs in your lower back.

▶ Be smart when lifting

Lifting with your back bent, or lifting while twisting, may cause a sudden injury or repetitive injury over a period of time.

▶ Rest your back after prolonged bending or twisting

It is advisable to stand upright for a few minutes and allow the spinal tissues to recover.

▶ Stretch your hamstrings

A little-known cause of lower back pain is tight hamstrings. Simple hamstring stretches can help decrease the pressure on your pelvis and provide relief across your low back.

▶ Pay attention to any warning signs

Don't overdo it at the gym or at work, or self-medicate to relieve symptoms. Seek medical care to learn about your spine and the correct treatment for your symptoms.

In the office

Many of us spend hours sitting in front of a computer each week. Proper office ergonomics — including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing, and good desk posture — can help you and your joints stay comfortable at work and in your home office.

At a minimum, you should embody the details in the graphic below, but it is important to conduct ergonomics assessments.

MONITOR

Adjust distance and height: top of the monitor at eye-level and slightly tilted.

ARMS

Relax shoulders, forearms parallel to the floor. Minimal bend at the wrist.

CHAIR

Should have a backrest and armrests, adjust height.

LEGS

Thighs parallel to the floor.

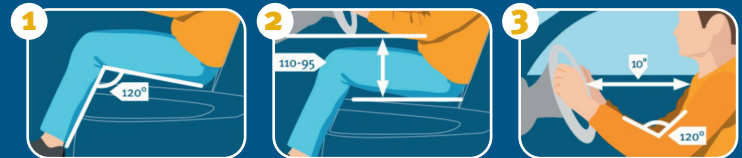
FEET

Parallel to the floor, use a footrest if necessary.



In the car

Many functions of local government require workers to drive in their day to day activities. Achieving the right seating and hand position in the car can not only keep you comfortable, it can keep you safe as well.



Under the Injury Prevention tab on the LGIS website, there are checklists to assist in setting up your workstation, and a guide to setting up your seat while driving.

Alternatively, the LGIS injury prevention team can assist with assessing the workstation/vehicle and making adjustments and recommendations to ensure it suits the worker.

Classic pumpkin soup

Now the weather is starting to cool, it's easy to turn to unhealthy comfort food. Instead, why not keep cosy with this delicious, classic pumpkin soup.

Serves 4 – 6 Total time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- ▶ 1kg pumpkin or butternut squash
- ▶ 1 brown onion, sliced
- ▶ 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- ▶ 3 cups salt-reduced vegetable or chicken stock
- ▶ 1 cup water
- ▶ Salt and pepper
- ▶ Small amount of butter (optional)

Method

- ▶ Peel and deseed pumpkin, then cut pumpkin into 3cm chunks
- ▶ Place pumpkin, sliced onion, garlic, stock and water in a large pot.
- ▶ Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until pumpkin is tender (approx. 10 minutes)
- ▶ Remove from the heat and use stick blender to blend until smooth
- ▶ Season to taste and add butter (optional) for added richness
- ▶ Ladle soup into bowls and serve with crusty bread!

Serving suggestion: try adding a dollop of natural yoghurt or a drizzle of chilli sauce to add a zing.



Lvl 3, 170 Railway Parade,
West Leederville WA 6007

(08) 9483 8888  lgiswa.com.au

The information in this document is general in nature and is not intended to be relied upon as advice regarding any individual situation and should not be relied upon as such.

This information is based on sources we believe to be reliable but we make no representation or warranty as to its accuracy.

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by an information storage or retrieval system, except as may be permitted, in writing, by LGIS.

LGIS is managed by JLT Public Sector, a division of JLT Risk Solutions Pty Ltd (ABN 69 009 098 864 AFS Licence No: 226827) ("JLT") and a business of Marsh McLennan.

© 2021 JLT Risk Solutions Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. LCPA 21/119.

The LGIS WorkCare Services team are specialist health and wellbeing professionals.

Contact Lauren Wojas LGIS WorkCare Services Manager, on 9483 8818 for more information on our health and wellbeing services.