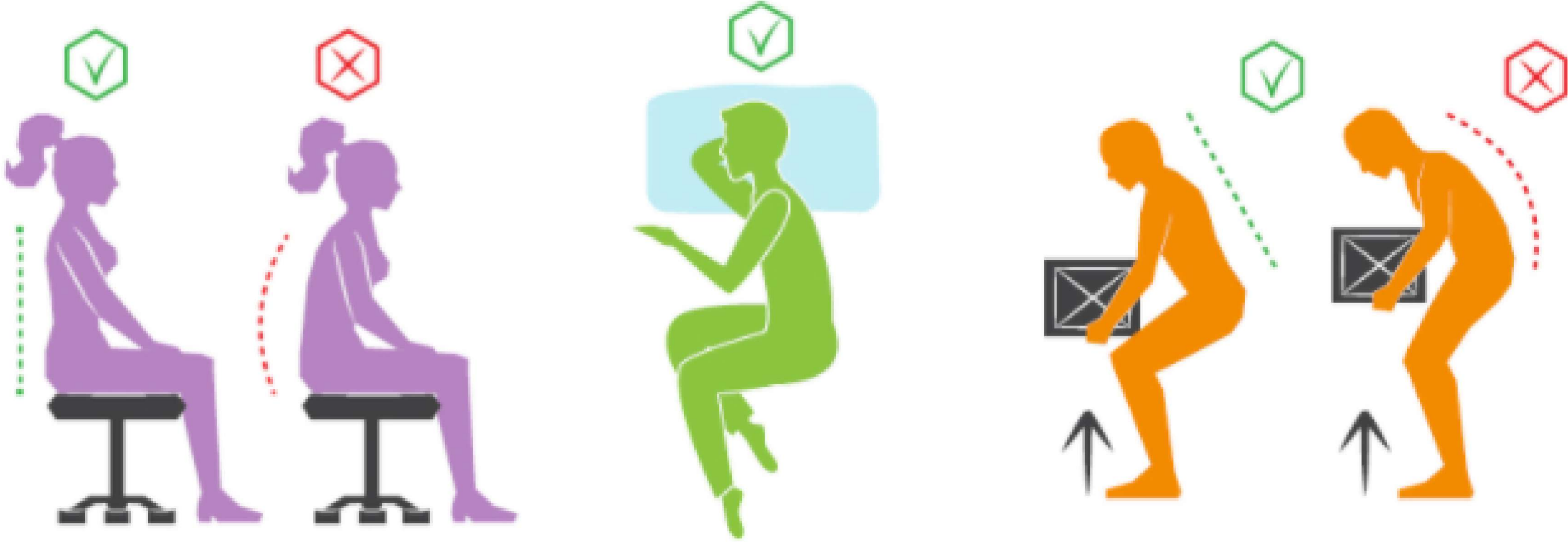


Protect your lower back

- Maintain good posture
- Eat healthy
- Regular exercise
- References

Maintain good posture



A good posture not only prevents lower back pain but also helps you to breathe right and support a strong body.¹ Some tips for improving posture are:²⁻⁵

- Avoid slouching when standing or sitting. A straight posture will support your lower back better.
 - When standing, keep your weight balanced evenly on both feet
 - Use a chair that has lower back support and is the right height for the work you do. Periodically switch your sitting position or walk around the office to relieve pressure on your lower back.
- Always sleep on a firm surface. Sleeping in the fetal position, on your side with your knees drawn up towards your stomach, can help open up the joints in the spine and relieve pressure on the lower back.
 - When lifting heavy items, bend your knees, pull your stomach muscles in, and keep your head down and in line with a straight back. Keep the heavy object close to your body and do not twist.

Eat healthy



Excess weight around the waist can strain the muscles in the lower back.⁶ A healthy diet can help you:^{6,7}

- Lose weight if you are overweight or maintain weight if it is at a healthy level.
- Keep your spine and bones strong by providing vitamins and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, vitamin D.

Regular exercise



Exercises that strengthen and stretch your muscles and improve your flexibility, such as walking, swimming, or yoga, can be helpful in preventing lower back pain. In case of acute lower back pain, all normal physical activity should be stopped for the first few days to help relieve pain and then slowly resumed. Some exercises to help strengthen and stretch the back are:^{8,9}

- **Flexion exercise:** Involves bending forward. It reduces pressure on the nerves, stretches the back and hip muscles, and strengthens the abdominal muscles.
 - **Extension exercise:** Involves bending backwards (example leg lifts and raising the upper body). It reduces the kind of pain that spreads to different parts of the body.
- **Stretching exercise:** It improves the ability of the muscles to move, bend, and twist. It also reduces stiffness and gives a wider range of motion.
 - **Aerobic exercise:** Exercises such as brisk walking, jogging, and swimming, increase the heart rate for a relatively long period of time (example 30 minutes). People with lower back pain should avoid high impact exercises.

Talk with your healthcare provider before starting a new diet or exercise plan.

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