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Six ways to help keep back pain away

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Six ways you can keep back pain from ruining your day

1. Lift the right way

Always lift objects from a squatting position. Use your hips and your legs to do the heavy work.

Avoid lifting, twisting and bending at the same time.

2. Exercise, exercise, exercise

Do stretches before you begin any exercise routine.

Practice abdominal crunches. They strengthen the muscles that support your lower back.

Walk or swim regularly to strengthen your lower back.

3. Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

Put a pillow between your legs if you sleep on your side. Put a pillow underneath your knees if you sleep on your back. This helps lessen the stress on your spine and makes you more comfortable.

4. At home or at work

Avoid sitting or standing for long periods.

Wear soft-soled shoes and heels less than 1½ inches high.

5. No slouching

Your mother was right — stand up straight.

When you stoop or slouch, your muscles and ligaments struggle to keep you balanced — and that can lead to back pain.

6. Healthy habits help

Stay within 10 pounds of the weight your doctor recommends. It will avoid strain on your back muscles.

Quit tobacco. If you use nicotine products, this can restrict the flow of blood to your spine. And that can lead to back pain.

And don't delay. See your doctor right away for back pain if you have also had:

- Fever
- Numbness or tingling
- Trauma — such as a fall or car accident

Learn more about back pain.
Check the Aetna InteliHealth® website at **www.intelihealth.com**.

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