

GABRIELE

FITNESS & PERFORMANCE

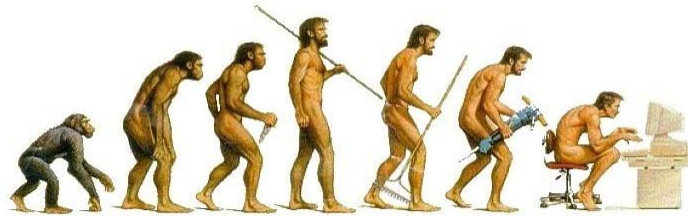


How Does Your Back Feel?

By Tom Langton

As you are reading this article I want you to take a second and notice your posture. Are your shoulders rounded forward? Is your spine in good position? If someone were to take a picture of how you were sitting, would it be a flattering photo (facebook worthy)?

Now think about how much time you spend in that position or a similar one throughout the day. You might begin to notice a trend when listing your daily activities. It doesn't matter if you're driving a car, eating breakfast, checking your e-mail or trying to catch up on your DVR, I'm willing to bet your posture is pretty standard.



All of our clients fill out a complete health history when they first set foot in our facility and there is no doubt that the most common injury or health problem is some type of back pain. The second most common problem is shoulder pain, generally stemming from an immobile thoracic spine (very tight upper back). These problems exist across the board in our society and here are some interesting facts that sum up my point.

- 80% of all adults suffer from lower back pain at some point in their lives
- 15% of all Sport related injuries involve the spine
- Low back pain is the #1 reason for Americans missing work

So do I have your attention? Good, now sit up straight, pull your shoulders back and we will continue. So is there anything you can do about the problem? Is there a way to reduce your risk of back pain and injury? I believe there is, but this is no simple task.

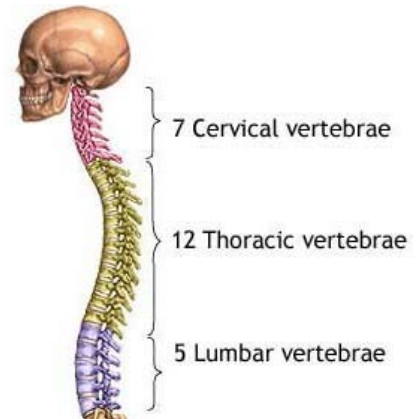
The simple answer would be to avoid putting your spine in a bad position (i.e.- Sitting a lot during the day). However, I know this is unavoidable for the majority of people. Some of you need to use a computer for your job and spend hours every day pounding the keyboard. You may also be forced to drive to work or drive your family around and I understand that. Also, we all have to eat, so this one is certainly unavoidable.

So what can you do? Here are some of the ways to protect your back and help get rid of back pain and reduce the risk of back injuries.

- 1- Be aware of your posture while you are sitting. Whether your driving, eating or at work, make an attempt to sit tall, pull your shoulders back and correct your posture as often as possible. As I stated above, some of these positions are unavoidable, but try to make the best of a bad situation and fix your posture as often as possible.
- 2- Strength Training- I know, this one is a shocker coming from me, but it really does help. "Core" training has become a HUGE trend in our industry for a reason, it is designed to help protect your spine. However, full body strength and conditioning is the best thing for you, not just a wide array of "ab" movements. Increasing the strength and work capacity of your entire body will help build the musculature surrounding the spine, reducing the amount of stress placed on your back.
- 3- Mobility- This is really a two part answer (3A and 3B)

- a. To most people, mobility just means moving your body (running, jumping, skipping, etc.), which will certainly help your back pain. Most importantly you won't be sitting. Also, movement increases systemic blood flow, allowing your body to transport the proper nutrients to your spine.

- b. Mobility in the health and fitness world refers to the range of motion of a particular joint (hip, shoulder, ankle). When talking about the spine, there are 3 main sections (cervical, thoracic and lumbar). For optimal health and performance, having mobility in your thoracic spine is extremely important. The "T-Spine" is not one joint, but 12 separate vertebrae which are designed to move. There are many effective ways to mobilize the thoracic spine. Mobility of the hips and shoulders are also important to spine health. A lack of mobility in the shoulders and hips will put transfer stress to your back.



CLICK HERE to see Vince review a few quick and easy ways to improve mobility right in your office.

So as you can see, you **DO NOT** have to constantly battle back pain. There are solutions to your problems, but you do have to work at them and make these strategies habits. Doing a few reps of a mobility exercise once a week is not enough to reverse the hours you spend seated, so you need to put in the work to get results. But if you do suffer from back pain of any kind, you know getting rid of it is well worth the effort.

Gabriele Fitness and Performance

20 Locust Avenue
Berkeley Heights NJ 07922
908-464-4441

info@gabrielefitness.com

www.gabrielefitness.com