Standing

While easier on the back than sitting, standing can also become a problem if maintained for an extended or prolonged period of time. Many people complain of back pain when they have been on their feet all day. Standing, particularly in a poor posture increases the demands on the back.

There are two types of postures that can lead to problems:

**The Forward Slumped Posture**
This is often associated with work areas that are too low. In this forward bent position, the back muscles must work to hold up the entire upper body and can lead to muscle fatigue. In addition, this position moves the spine out of its three natural curves and increases the pressure on the back.

Ideally, work areas should be placed at a level that allows work to be done in an upright posture. When that is not possible, periodic changes in posture or moving, plus a brief stretch throughout the day, will help to reduce the accumulation of fatigue.

**The Overarched Posture**
In this posture, people stand with their hips forward and rest on the joints of their backs. This posture overarches the low back and may lead to back pain, typical of people who work overhead for extended periods of time or who have weak abdominal muscles.

The overarched posture can be offset in a number of ways:
- Tightening the stomach muscles to reduce the arch in the lower back.
- When standing, elevate one foot slightly off the ground and rest it on a foot rail, stool, or small box.

Ask yourself, do I have to do this job standing up? Sitting for a few minutes periodically during the day relieves stress on the back. Performing simple stretches, such as a gentle forward bend, can also reduce the accumulation of discomfort associated with prolonged standing. Soft-soled shoes or good quality shoe inserts can reduce the amount of pressure on the back when standing and walking on hard surfaces.
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