

Back Health

**A guide for school staff that work with
students who have physical
disabilities.**





How to keep a healthy back.

Advice and strategies to reduce the risk of back strain at work.

Julie Noble : Risk Assessor and safe Moving and Handling Advisor.

Contact Julie at Richard Cloudesley Outreach Team.

Safety at work

Workplace health and safety legislation is in place to protect employees.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

- Women must not lift a student weighing above 16kg.
- Men must not lift a student weighing above 25kg.

Always comply with the regulations.

- All manual lifts for students weighing over the recommended weight are unsafe.
- All supporting of a significant part of the weight of the person is unsafe.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body are responsible for ensuring safe working practices are implemented.

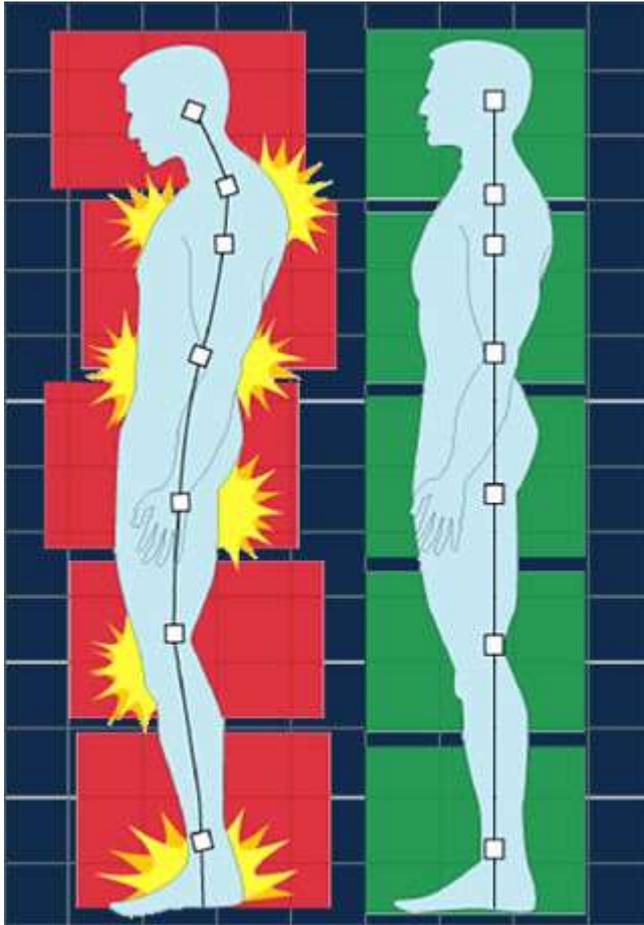
Students who have physical disabilities require a risk assessment and a care plan that details how they should be safely handled.

Staff working with students who have physical disabilities require training that teaches them the safe skills and strategies.

Staff who complete the training must comply with all the safe guidelines.

Staff must implement the safe strategies.

Staff must correctly use the equipment provided.



A Healthy Back

The spine has a difficult job to do, so it is already vulnerable.

It has to provide strength to keep us upright and also flexibility to allow movement.

Think about how you care for your back

Slouching and slumping and stooping can be bad for your back.

Twisting and leaning and bending can be bad for your back.

Good posture – taking care of your back

What is posture?

Posture is the position in which you hold your body and limbs when standing, sitting or lying down.

Good posture v bad posture

When you exhibit prolonged poor posture your muscles have to work harder to support your body.

This increases your chances of feeling fatigued.

To have good posture means that your bones and joints are in line so that your muscles can be used properly.

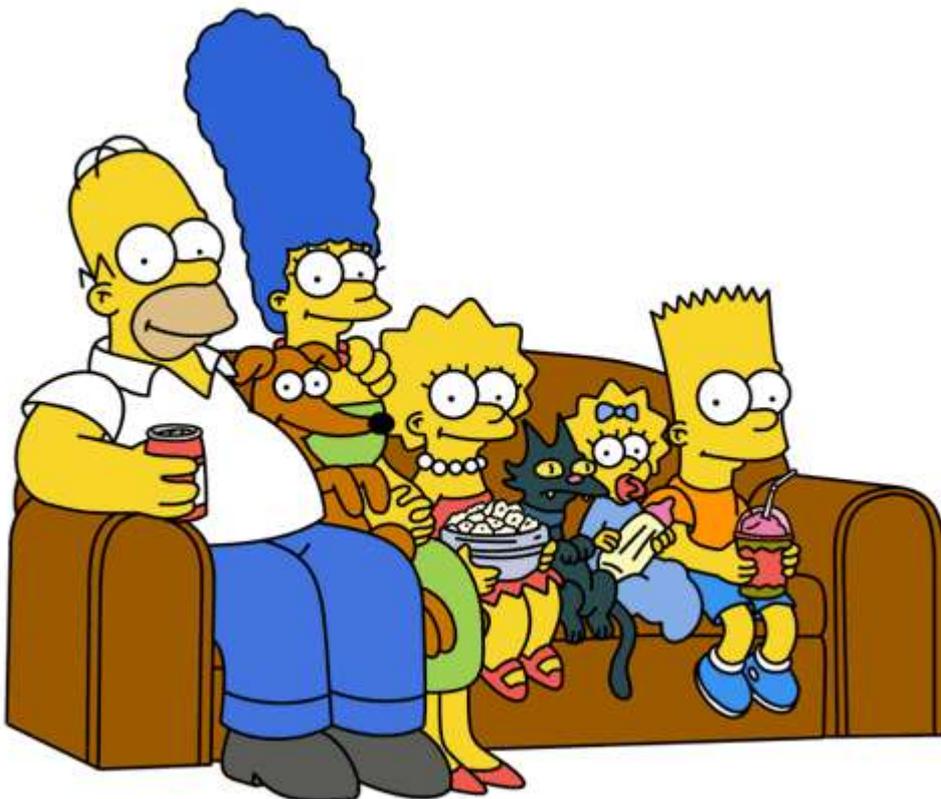
Good posture means that you can move freely

Changing position during the day

Our bodies are designed to move freely.

Standing up in one position for a long time is tiring.

Aim to move around rather than standing in one position for too long.



When you sit on a chair follow these tips:

- Put your back against the backrest of the chair.
- Your knees should make a right angle.
- Place your feet flat on the floor.
- Don't cross your legs.

When you sit on the floor good positions include cross legged sitting and long sitting.



PauseThink....Plan.....

Pause

Think about your tasks and responsibilities during the working day.

Think

Think about the safe strategies. Think about the equipment that has been provided. Remember your training and the skills you were taught. Follow the risk assessment. Follow the safe moving and handling plan.

Plan

Think about the setting. Plan ahead and make sure the space is free from hazards and that the equipment has been checked and is ready to use.



Practical tips for a healthy back around the school setting

- Arrange and organise classrooms to ensure that stooping, bending over and awkward postures are reduced to a minimum.
- Plan the classroom layout to include wide and clear path ways .
- Make sure pathways are free from hazards.
- Moving and carrying school equipment and resources needs consideration. Try to reduce lifting wherever possible. Always use a trolley, ramp or lift. Remember the Regulations! Choose and use equipment that is easily mobile.
- If lifting a load weighing less than the safe threshold is required follow these tips



1. Get close to the object.
2. Place your feet wide apart to keep steady.
3. Using both hands get a good grip.
4. Move down and up using your knees and hips – not just your back.
5. Use a smooth action – avoid rushing or sudden twisting.

Did you know that the bag you carry should weigh no more than 15% of your body weight



- Pack your bag to contain only what is essential.
- Rucksacks are great as they distribute the weight evenly.
- If you carry a shoulder bag try to carry the bag so that it is crossed over your body.
- If you carry a shopping bag remember to swap from side to side.

Simple practical changes can impact on the health of your back.

Pause Think.... Plan

For further information about the outreach service that Julie offers please contact – Richard Cloudesley Outreach Team.

