BACK OFF PAIN

HOW TO RELIEVE LOWER BACK PAIN

DMG
ORTHOPAEDICS
BONE, JOINT & SPINE CENTER
A Member of DuPage Medical Group

EASE THE ACHE

Persistent lower back pain can make everyday tasks almost unbearable, but simple lifestyle changes can ease the ache & help you live life pain-free.

Follow our guide to alleviate your pain & find relief.

PAIN REDUCING SLEEP POSITIONS

Try a firm mattress and one of these two sleeping positions to keep your spine in a neutral position with the least amount of pressure.
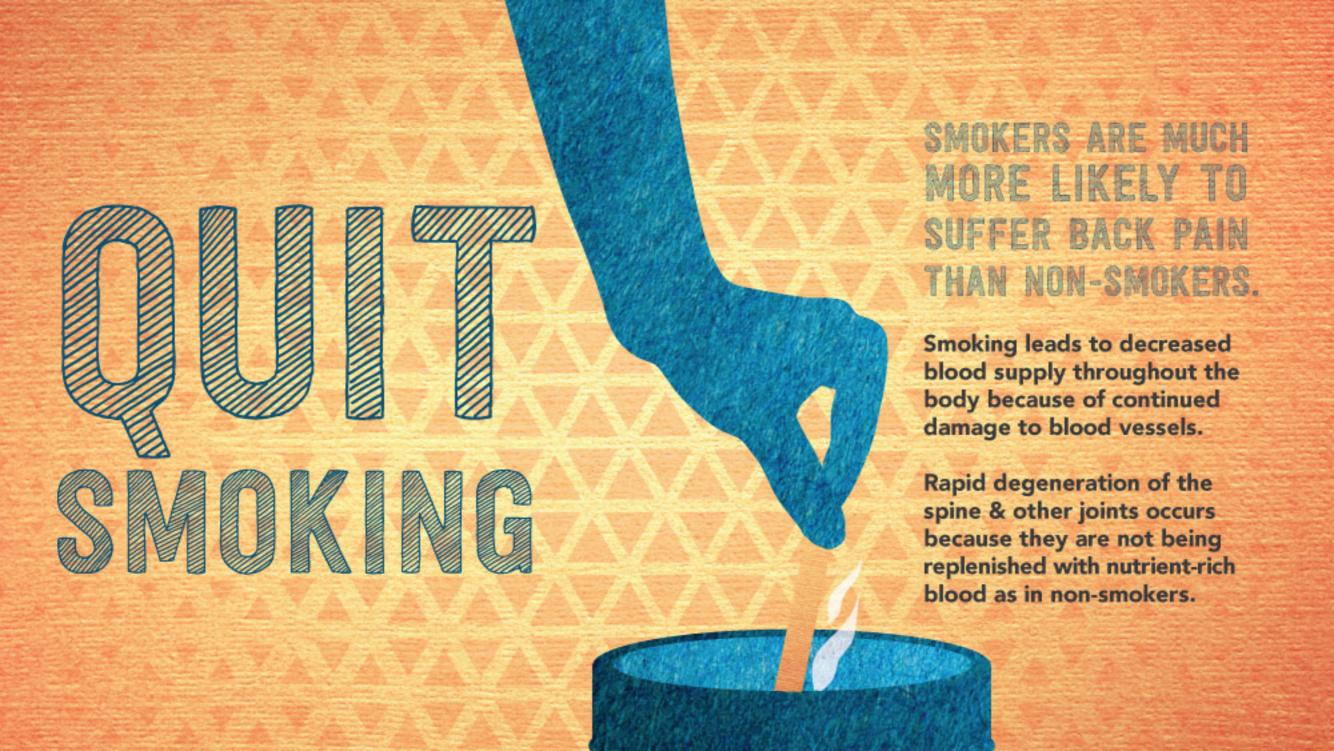
ON YOUR SIDE
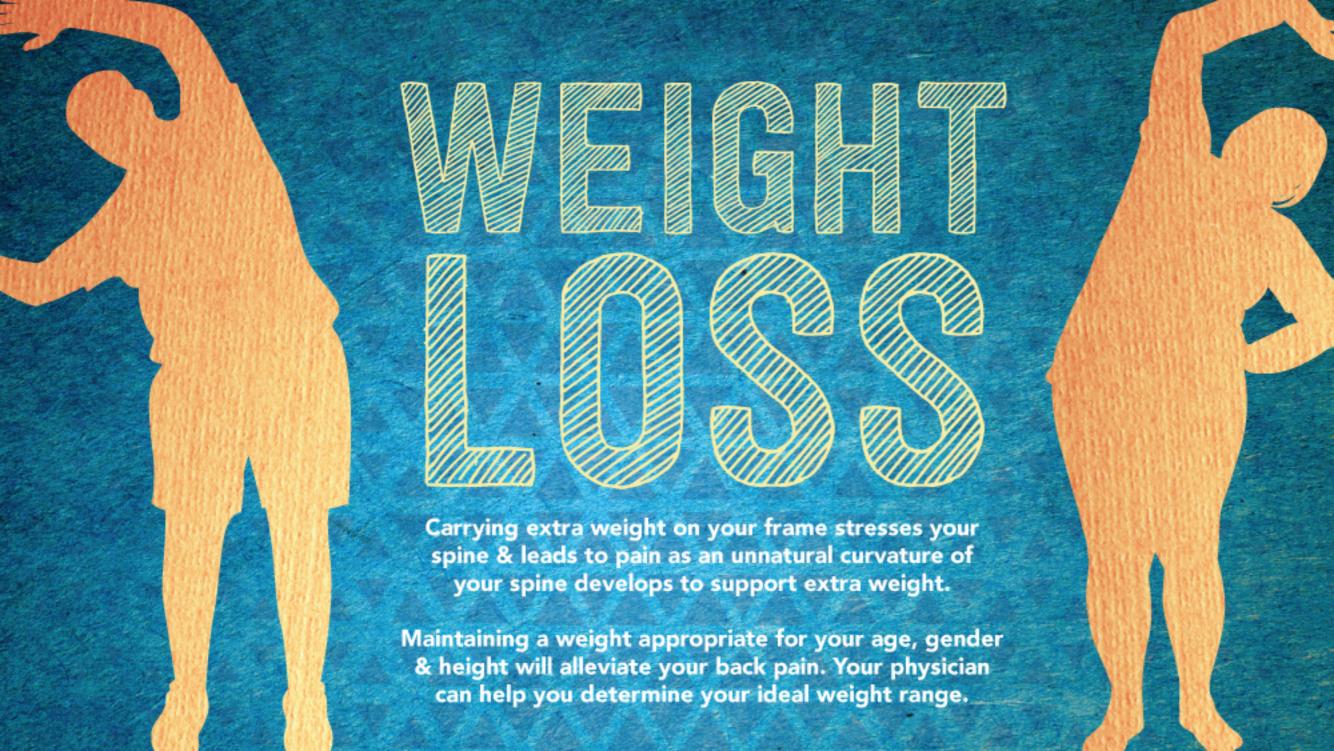One pillow under your head & one pillow between your knees, legs stacked on top of one another.

ON YOUR BACK
One pillow under your head & one pillow under your knees.

QUIT SMOKING

WEIGHT LOSS

Carrying extra weight on your frame stresses your spine & leads to pain as an unnatural curvature of your spine develops to support extra weight.

Maintaining a weight appropriate for your age, gender & height will alleviate your back pain. Your physician can help you determine your ideal weight range.
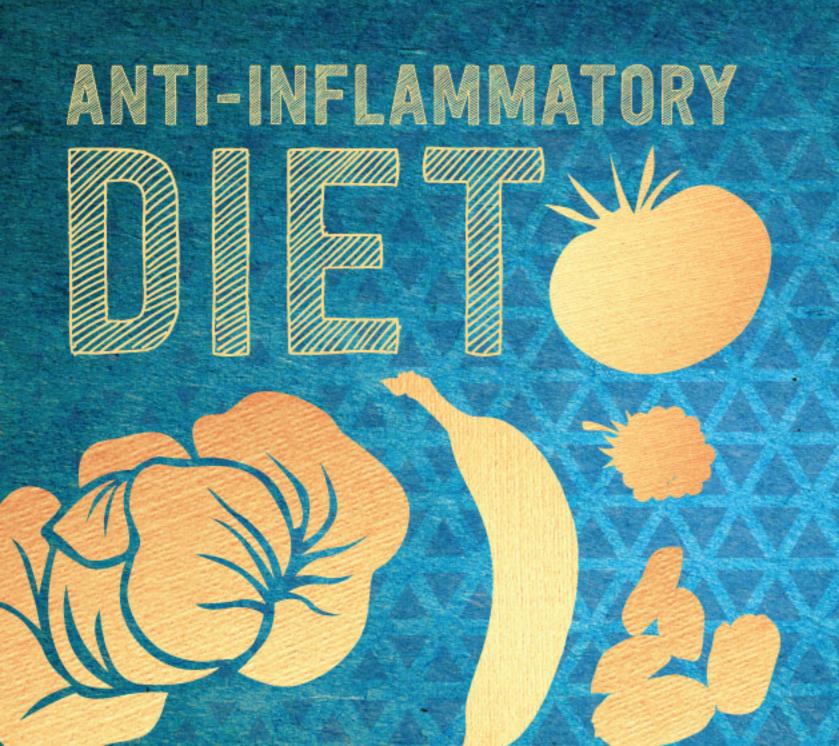
FOOTWEAR

Choose shoes that have a wide toe box & support the arches of your feet.

High heels can cause an unnatural alignment of the spine and force strain on the low back.

Pick kicks with thick enough cushioning in the soles to absorb shock as you walk.

See a podiatrist to consider custom orthotics if support-ive footwear doesn't help.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

Ingesting processed foods can trigger an immune response resulting in inflammation throughout your body, leading to pain from swelling.

Fill your stomach with non-processed foods high in nutrients and low in saturated fats.

Search for choices rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants and phytochemicals to combat inflammation.

MAINTAIN
CORE STRENGTH

EXERCISE
REGULARLY

TRY YOGA
OR PILATES

Weak abdominal muscles are less able to support the body & more stress is placed on the spine.

Strengthening your core will improve stability, range of movement & balance.

Increased core strength will help maintain the correct alignment of your spine.

When you're in pain you may tend to avoid exercise, but being inactive can result in more intense pain & slows the healing process.

Maintaining flexibility & blood flow to your spine will promote healing by nourishing the soft tissues near the joint.

Try gradual & moderate exercise like walking.

Sitting as little as possible or getting up to move around frequently can also alleviate back pain.

Yoga and Pilates are effective exercises that strengthen your core without putting too much stress on your back.

For at home yoga/pilates exercises, try these videos:

Stott Pilates by Moira Merrithew

Super Slimdown Pilates Yoga Blend by Ellen Barret

Denise Austin Power Yoga Plus Balance by Tom McCook
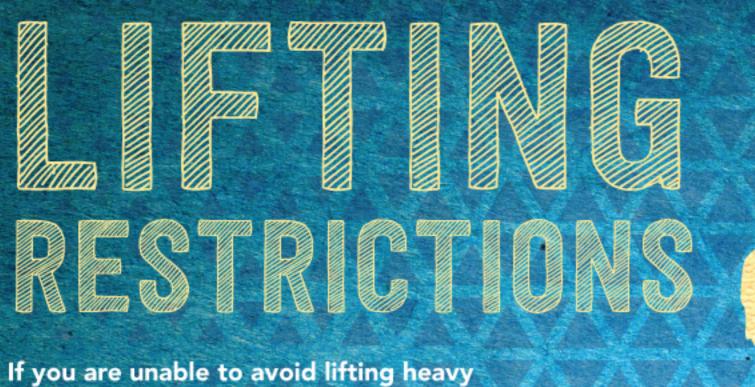
Denise Austin Fat-Blasting Yoga

AVOID MORNING FLEXION

Flexion means the act of bending the spine forward, or flexing the spine. Flexion strains the layers of collagen in the spinal discs and can lead to a disc bulge (herniation).

A better way to get a similar stretch in the spine is to do a yoga pose like cat or camel which places no weight load on your spine.
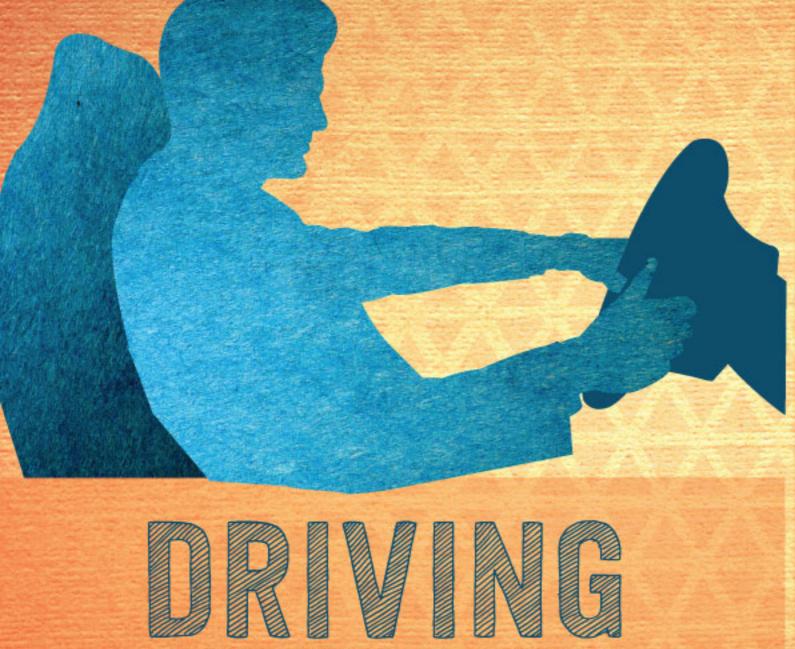
After rising from bed, the discs in your spine are fully hydrated & are stressed more when stretched improperly.

LIFTING RESTRICTIONS

If you are unable to avoid lifting heavy objects all together, establish firm footing and be sure you are bending your legs & keeping your back straight while lifting.

You should never bend forward or attempt to lift with straight legs.

Lower heavy objects back to the floor in the same bent-knee/straight back position.

DRIVING MODIFICATIONS

TIPS TO REDUCE PAIN WHILE DRIVING

Make sure your headrest is supporting your neck.

Position your arm rests to the right height for you & be sure they are well-padded and wide.

The front of your seat should not press into the back of your knees.

Adjust the lumbar support for your height, knees should be at the same level or slightly higher than your hips.

When driving for long periods, take breaks to move around.

Avoid being "frozen" in the same position for long periods of driving.

POSTURE

If creating a sit & stand work station is not an option, consider sitting on a balance ball during prolonged seating at a desk to allow for adjusting your position & building core strength.

Remember that your computer monitor needs to be at eye level & the keyboard should be level with the elbows to avoid hunching.