Royal Osteoporosis Society
Better bone health for everybody

Exercises to care for your back 7

Moving and lifting safely

Who: You'll find this useful if:

- you have osteoporosis and spinal fractures and are looking to protect your spine from pain or further fractures
- you have a diagnosis of osteoporosis or are at an increased risk of fractures

Regardless of whether you have had any previous fractures, you'll find these recommendations useful to reduce your chance of injury and pain in your back.

Why: You need to be able to bend forward and move around for everyday activities. This is generally safe and won't cause a broken bone. Spinal fractures do sometimes seem to happen during everyday activities without falling over and you may be concerned that this will happen again if it's happened to you. Although it's not clear exactly what movements increase the risk of a broken bone, making some adjustments to your technique could help to reduce the risk of injury.

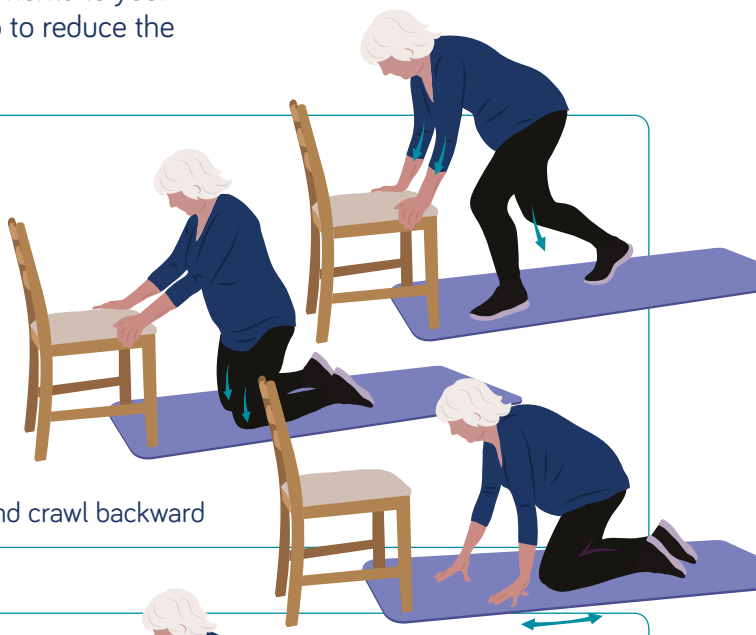
What you need: You'll need a chair and an item to lift if you want to practice some of these exercises.

When and how: For everyday movements or activities that involve bending forward or getting up and down from the floor. These recommendations will help you adapt your technique and over time will become a skill that you naturally use.

1

How to get down to the floor

- To get down to the floor, stand facing the seat of a sturdy chair, step forward with your strongest leg and place your hands on to the seat
- Lower your back knee down to the floor carefully, with your weight through your arms and bring the other knee down
- Slowly put one hand on the floor, followed by the other and crawl backward



2

How to get up from the floor

- Bring your strongest leg up first placing your foot flat on the floor and curl your back toe under
- With the weight coming through your arms, use your flat foot to drive yourself up bringing your back foot together with your front
- Pause with your knees slightly bent, before raising all the way up, keeping your back straight and taking your hands away from the chair

0808 800 0035 - Specialist nurse Helpline
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This fact sheet forms part of a range of nine fact sheets on exercise for osteoporosis and bone health. Further resources including general information about osteoporosis and bone health are available at theros.org.uk or call 01761 471771

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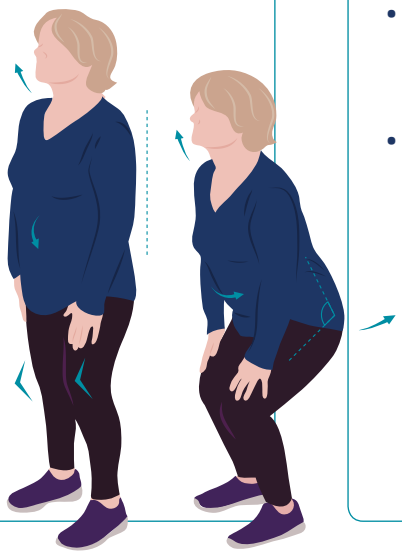
3

Using the hip hinge to bend safely

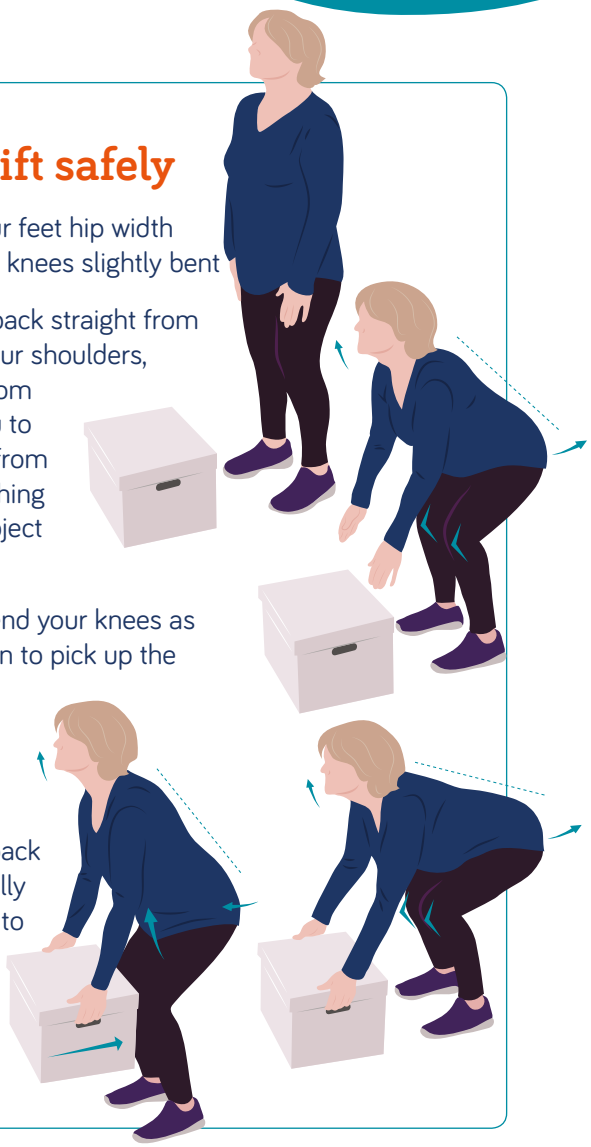
- Stand with your feet hip width apart with your hands on top of your thighs
- Tighten your tummy muscles and keep your back straight from your hips to your shoulders
- Stick your bottom out behind you and bend at your hips. Think of your hips as a hinge and bend your knees slightly
- Keep your chest and head up
- **Tip:** To reach a lower level such as picking something up from the floor, you will need to bend your knees, keeping your back straight.



4

How to lift safely

- Stand with your feet hip width apart and your knees slightly bent
- Keeping your back straight from your hips to your shoulders, stick your bottom out behind you to bend forward from your hips, reaching towards the object (hip hinge)
- Continue to bend your knees as you move down to pick up the object
- Pull the object close to your body and keeping your back straight, carefully come back up to a standing position



Well done for taking time to work on your technique for moving and lifting. Use them daily and you'll find they become a habit in no time! You could also try out some of our other similar fact sheets like *Bending forward with osteoporosis* fact sheet (8) theros.org.uk/exercise/BendingForward

Tip: Think 'straight back' when you are moving and lifting but don't be afraid of some forward bending for general movements that don't strain your back - flexibility is still important.

Remember these techniques are 'to be on the safe side' for you to feel more positive and in control. Try not to think of them as strict rules or feel anxious about every move you make. See the accompanying video to these exercises at theros.org.uk/exercise/MovingAndLifting

Training yourself to practice good posture, in combination with good moving and lifting habits, will be helpful if you are aiming to prevent problems with your back in the future. Why not take a look at some exercises to help with this in our *Exercise to help with posture* fact sheet (6) theros.org.uk/exercise/Posture.

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