

# Ross Brittleton

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## Physical Therapy / Massage Therapy / Thai Bodywork

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### General Instructions

#### When in Acute Low Back Pain

You must retain the lordosis at all times (lordosis is the hollow in the lower back). Bending forwards as in touching the toes will only stretch and weaken the supporting structures of the back and lead to further injury. Losing the lordosis when sitting will also cause further strain.

#### SITTING

- When in acute pain you should sit as little as possible, and then only for short periods only.
- At all times you must sit with a lordosis. Therefore you must place a supportive roll in the small of the back, especially when sitting in a car or lounge chair.
- If you have the choice you must sit on a firm, high chair with a straight back such as a kitchen chair. You should avoid sitting on a low, soft couch with a deep seat; this will force you to sit with hips lower than knees, and you will round the back and lose the lordosis.
- The legs must never be kept straight out in front as in sitting in bed, in the bath or on the floor; in this position you are forced to lose the lordosis.
- When rising from sitting you must retain the lordosis; move to the front of the seat, stand up by straightening the legs, and avoid bending forwards at the waist.
- Poor sitting postures are certain to keep you in pain or make you worse.

#### DRIVING A CAR

- When in acute pain you should drive the car as little as possible. It is better to be a passenger than to drive yourself.
- When driving, your seat must be close enough to the steering wheel to allow you to maintain the lordosis. If in this position your hips are lower than your knees you may be able to raise yourself by sitting on a pillow.

#### BENDING FORWARDS

- When in acute pain you should avoid activities which require bending forwards or stooping, as you will be forced to lose the lordosis.
- You may be able to retain the lordosis by kneeling - for example, when making the bed, vacuuming, cleaning the floor, or weeding the garden.

#### LIFTING

- When in acute pain you should avoid lifting 'altogether.
- If this is not possible you should at least not lift objects that are awkward or heavier than about thirty pounds.
- You must always use the correct lifting technique: during lifting the sack must remain upright and never stoop or bend forwards; stand close to the load, have a firm footing and wide stance; bend the knees and keep the back straight; have a secure grip on the load; lift by straightening the knees; take a steady lift and do not jerk; shift your feet to turn and do not twist your back.

## **LYING**

- A good firm support is usually desirable when lying. If your bed is sagging, slats or plywood supports between mattress and base will firm it. You can also place the mattress on the floor, a simple but temporary solution.
- You may be more comfortable at night when you use a supportive roll. A rolled up towel, wound around your waist and tied down in front, is usually satisfactory.
- When rising from lying you must retain the lordosis; turn on one side, draw both knees up and drop the feet over the edge of the bed; sit up by pushing yourself up with the hands and avoid bending forwards at the waist.

## **COUGHING AND SNEEZING**

- When in acute pain you must try to stand up, bend backwards and increase the lordosis while you cough or sneeze.

## **REMEMBER**

- At all times you must retain the lordosis; if you slouch you will have discomfort and pain.
- Good posture is the key to spinal support.

**For more information on Massage, other therapies available or to make an appointment  
contact:**

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