

The Spine Column

A Special Newsletter for MVP Health Care[®] Members **Issue 2, 2022**

Returning to Work with Low Back Pain

If you are out of work due to low back pain, you may be nervous about going back. Here are some strategies to help avoid reinjury.

Pay attention to your posture. Bad posture can make pain worse.

- Stand or sit tall, with your shoulders back and your stomach pulled in to support your back. Your ears and shoulders should be lined up over your hips
- Anytime you begin to feel pain in your back, check your posture

Get some exercise every day. Exercise can help treat your pain, and can also keep your back from hurting again. Try stretching, walking, swimming, or biking.

Take pain medicines exactly as directed or prescribed. If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.

Take regular breaks, if possible. Try to take 3- to 5-minute breaks, or change tasks, every 20–40 minutes. This is a good time to do light stretching.

Your supervisor or HR department may have good ideas on how you can protect your back at work. Some companies have experts who can suggest different tools or ways to do your job.

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Contact Us

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday,

8:30 am–5 pm

TTY 711

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvp-listens.com.

We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with chronic back pain. For more information or to see if you qualify, call 1-866-942-7966. MVP's program is based on the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement's (ICSI) health care guidelines for the treatment of adult low back pain. This program must be coordinated with your physician.



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If your job involves a lot of sitting:

- Place a small pillow, a rolled-up towel, or a lumbar roll in the curve of your back for extra support
- Sit in a chair that is low enough that you can place both feet flat on the floor. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips
- Try sitting on a kneeling chair or an exercise ball

If your job involves lifting:

- Hold the object close to you
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight as you grasp the object, then straighten your knees to lift it up. Try to avoid twisting
- Squat to put down objects
- Try not to lift something by yourself that is too heavy or too awkward, or that will not allow you to see where you are walking
- Do not rely on a “back belt” to protect your back. Studies have not shown them to be effective



Lower Your Risk of the Flu and Pneumonia

It is important to get vaccinated against the flu each year and pneumonia, as directed by your doctor.

Pneumonia is a lung infection that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Signs of it include coughing, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, rapid breathing or shortness of breath, chills, or chest pain. Many pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through vaccination and appropriate treatment.

Certain people are more likely to become ill with pneumonia:

- Adults age 65 or older
- Children younger than age five
- People under the age of 65 who have underlying medical conditions (like diabetes or HIV/AIDS)
- People ages 19–64 who smoke cigarettes
- People ages 19–64 who have asthma

Simple steps to preventing the flu and pneumonia:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Clean hard surfaces that are touched often (like doorknobs and countertops)
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your elbow, or sleeve
- Limit your exposure to cigarette smoke
- Take steps to treat, control, and prevent conditions like diabetes and HIV/AIDS

Get vaccinated. Several vaccines prevent infections that can cause pneumonia, including Pneumococcal, Pertussis (whooping cough), and seasonal influenza (flu) vaccines. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Movement in Focus: Curl-Ups

The “core” muscles are the muscles of your back, stomach, and buttocks. Strong core muscles play a key role in keeping your back pain-free. Curl-ups help strengthen your core.



1. Start on the floor, lying on your back.
2. Bend your knees at a 90-degree angle. Place your feet flat on the floor.
3. Cross your arms over your chest. If this exercise bothers your neck, try putting your hands behind your neck (not your head), with your elbows spread apart.
4. Slowly tighten your belly muscles.
5. Raise your shoulder blades off the floor. Keep your head in line with your body, and do not press your chin to your chest.
6. Hold this position for one or two seconds, then slowly lower yourself back down to the floor.
7. Repeat 8–12 times.

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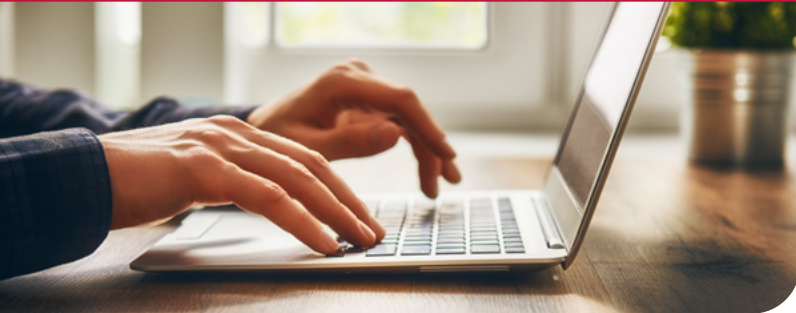
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Stay a Step Ahead with Preventive Care

Life can get hectic and going to the doctor for any reason can be stressful. But you deserve the peace of mind and control over your health that preventive screenings can provide. To find out if you are due for screenings or any other preventive care services, *Sign In* to your MVP online account at my.mvphealthcare.com and select *Preventive Care Reminders*, and talk to your doctor.

Living Well Programs

MVP offers a variety of classes and workshops—both in-person and virtual—to help you live well physically, emotionally, and otherwise! Find classes like yoga, stretch & strengthening, or even a cooking class. To find a class that is right for you, visit mvphealthcare.com/LWCalendar. Filter by county to find the programs nearest you.



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