

## What are proper body mechanics?

Body mechanics refers to the way we move during daily activities. Proper body mechanics can help you avoid injury and muscle fatigue. Follow these 3 guidelines of proper body mechanics:

- **Bend at your hips and knees instead of your waist.** This helps you maintain your balance by dividing your weight evenly between your upper and lower body.
- **Spread your feet apart to create a foundation of support.** This helps you maintain your balance from side to side.
- **Keep your back, neck, pelvis, and feet aligned when you turn or move.** Do not twist or bend at your waist.

## How do I practice proper body mechanics?

- **When you stand:**
  - Keep your feet flat on the floor about 12 inches (30 cm) apart.
  - Do not lock your knees.
  - Keep your shoulders down, chest out, and back straight.
- **When you lift an object:**
  - Your feet should be apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other.
  - Keep your back straight.
  - Bend from your hips and knees.
  - **Do not** bend at your waist.
  - Lift the object using your arm and leg muscles.
  - Hold the object close to your body at your waist level.
  - Use the same process if you need to push or pull something heavy.
- **When you sit:**
  - Sit with your back straight and place extra support behind your lower back.
  - Get up and change positions often if you sit for long periods of time.
  - Ask about exercises to stretch your neck and shoulders.
  - Adjust your computer so the top of the monitor is at the same level as your eyes.
  - Use a paper holder so that the document is at the same level as the computer screen.
  - Use a headset if you use the telephone often.

## What else do I need to know about proper body mechanics?

- **Wear shoes with low heels, closed backs, and nonslip soles.** This will help prevent falling and improve your body alignment.
- **Pull rather than push an object** to avoid strain on your back muscles. The muscles you use to pull are stronger than those you use to push.
- **Ask for help or use an available device for assistance.** Assistive or mechanical devices help decrease your risk for injury.

SOURCE: [Medically reviewed by drugs.com](https://www.drugs.com)