



Parents & Posture: Out and about with your child

Prams/Pushchairs

It is often tempting to select based on brand, colour and aesthetics! However, this is an important purchase for you and your partner, so taking time to assess the choices and finding the one that will best suit both you and your partner's needs is important.

- A pushchair or pram with adjustable height settings is ideal, as it can be moved to suit your own height and that of anyone else who will be pushing it. You should be able to walk upright with a straight spine and hands resting at a comfortable height.
- A pram or pushchair must be one that is easy for you to put up and collapse. Try them out to check! Some on the market claim to be able to be done with one hand but you don't want the mechanism to be too stiff or complicated to work or require you to press down hard with one foot at the back, as this is not good for your back. Some come apart into sections and, although this takes slightly longer to put in the car, it can be much better on the back as each piece will be much lighter. Importantly, assess your own needs and choose accordingly. Check you can safely carry it once collapsed; some people find that the shape a pushchair collapses down to is in itself, difficult to manoeuvre!
- There are instances where people feel they benefit the most from having more than one pushchair, each to suit different circumstances (lighter model with 'car seat' which enables easier transfer into the car, for example). If this is the case, the same care should be used when selecting all options.

Carrying babies

- Carrying your baby as close as possible to your centre of gravity is preferable – across your back or front is best. A carrier/sling or papoose is a good option.
- Select a carrier that 'criss-crosses' at the back, so baby's weight is distributed more evenly. Make sure you read the instructions that come with the product to ensure that you are using it correctly.
- If carrying your baby without a sling or carrier, keep the baby's weight close to your body and to your hip, with your spine straight, Swap sides regularly.

Carrying toddlers

- As your baby grows, lifting and carrying gets more difficult. For carrying a long way, a backpack carrier is best as it distributes the weight evenly across your back. Make sure you have the shoulder straps firmly tightened and click the waist strap into place. There are carriers that take the weight onto the hips, but make sure you use them with your spine straight.
- Encouraging toddlers to do as much as possible for themselves, as appropriate, such as getting into the car seat, will save your back a lot of stress!

In the car

- When putting your baby into the car, hold the baby close to you as you move towards the vehicle. Keep your back straight and only bend your knees when you have got as close to the car seat as possible. Only at this stage should you reach out to put the baby in the seat. If you're carrying the baby in a chair, rest the chair on the edge of the car seat, then manoeuvre it into position within the car, keeping your knees bent and back straight.
- Don't try to reach out too early and avoid bending from the waist.

General Posture Advice

- **The fitter you are and the more muscle tone you have the less likely you are to injure yourself. Talk to your chiropractor, GP or other healthcare provider for advice on exercises to develop your core strength.**
- **Parents of babies and children inevitably carry heavy bags! Using a rucksack style bag is best as you can spread the weight evenly across your back. Check the straps are tightened so that the load is held against your back.**
- **Avoid high heels and wear comfortable, supportive shoes.**
- **If you have children already, it can be difficult if they need lifting and carrying. Always lift with your spine straight and bend knees to avoid leaning, stretching or bending.**
- **Simple activities such as stretching and shoulder shrugging can all help to keep your back in line.**
- **Do not sit for prolonged periods, take a regular break and, when sitting, let the seat take your weight and, if possible, keep as much of your body in contact with the chair so that your whole body is supported. Knees should be lower than your hips.**

Further information about chiropractic can be obtained from
www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk

For further information contact the
British Chiropractic Association on 0118 950 5950