

Tips to relieve pressure on spine

IF you thought a few stretches would help, you are wrong. We asked Tanya Wyatt from Happy Body what she would suggest people do to avoid work-related back pain:

"I would suggest that people definitely don't need to stretch their backs out after a day's work. This is because most people slouch through the day, putting their backs into a rounded position, which increases the pressure on their spinal discs. What would be better is to remain standing, walking or moving in any way possible, in order to counter the disastrous effects of sitting for prolonged periods.

"Better yet, would be to move for

at least five minutes every 25 minutes throughout the day. Standing desks are making a big entrance on to the global stage.

"We need to keep our backs in a functional position (which is slightly arched in the lower back – the opposite of slouched), so even popping a rolled up towel behind the back while seated can help keep it in a neutral position, relieving the pressure on the discs.

"There are four muscles (typically known as the 'core') that work together to provide a powerful stabilising system for the torso.

"When these muscles are 'switched on', they create excellent

support for the spine. The problem is that they can only be engaged either through movements that activate them, or through consciously thinking about them and this is where the problem lies with sitting for long periods. As a preventative measure, it always helps to have a stronger, rather than weaker, core muscle group so I would recommend focusing on it in any exercise programme.

"By sitting all day, we increase the pressure on our discs and keep our backs in a constantly 'stretched' position, but we also create tightness in our chests, due to our shoulders dropping forward."