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GAWLER
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Working Postures

Sweeping, Vacuuming, Shovelling

To minimise the risk of injuring your back while doing these activities:

- Do not try to do everything in one go – work in stages
- As much as possible avoid stooping – use long-handled appliances. To get under chairs and tables, stand with one foot in front of the other and bend your knees.
- Try to maintain the curve in your lower back. This can be made easier when vacuuming by holding the hose or cord of the vacuum cleaner behind your back in the opposite hand to the one holding the handle.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles with each sweeping action or forward movement to avoid rotation (twisting) strains on your low back.

Washing Dishes, Ironing, Cleaning Teeth, Changing Nappies, Cooking, Working in the Shed

The stooped position often used for these activities frequently causes or exacerbates back pain. The following tips can help to minimise this pain.

- Adjust the height at which you are working eg. by putting the ironing table up, putting the change table up on wooden blocks or bricks.
- If you cannot raise the work surface, bend your knees or sit on the edge of a high stool
- Support your body weight on one or both arms to decrease the weight through the spine. If both arms are in use firmly lean against the bench/sink.
- Additional relief may be gained by placing a small step (or phone book) under one foot, or opening the sink cupboard and placing your foot on the low shelf. Change feet from time to time. This helps to maintain the curve of your low back, reducing the strain placed on it.

Hanging Out Washing

Ensure that the clothes line is as low as possible or, use a step so that heavy clothes do not have to be lifted above shoulder height.

Gardening

Working in the garden requires bending, twisting, lifting and prolonged postures and can place undue stress on your back. It is better to:

- Kneel rather than bend your back. Knee pads or portable kneeling devices are often helpful.
- Avoid twisting. Ensure that you move your feet when doing manual work
- Wet the soil before digging to soften it
- Use a trolley or wheelbarrow to transport loads. Push rather than pull it.
- Work for short periods of time only. Stand up regularly and bend backwards.

Car Related Activities

When loading the car:

- Keep articles together so you do not have to hold bent postures while retrieving them
- Do not lift heavy objects in and out of the boot without assistance. When lifting out of the boot, first move the object as close to the rear as possible
- Rest the object on the lip of the boot if necessary
- Placing objects on a mat or a rug in the boot may help you to pull the objects closer to you before lifting

If you are working on the engine:

- Do not spend extended periods bent over the engine
- Lean on the bodywork as much as possible
- Reverse your flexed/bent posture frequently by standing up straight and bending backwards regularly

