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Prevention of Injury to Midwives: A quick guide

Cultivate awareness of your body

The way our body moves in space is unique to each of us. Notice what positions put you at risk for pain and injury. How can you shift this position or movement pattern to increase your safety?

Posture

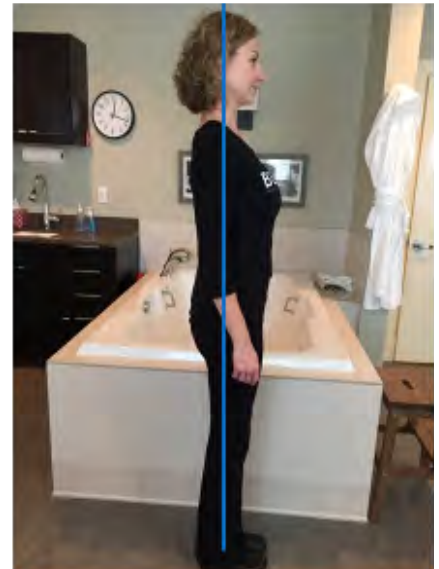
Throughout your day, reset your posture. Stack your body in a balanced line. Align your ears over shoulders over hips over ankles. When sitting: keep pelvis upright, lumbar curve in neutral, align ears over shoulders over hips.

Core Strength and Stability

We all must find a way to integrate core strengthening exercises in our lives. This adds stability that is protective of our backs and, by extension, our whole body. Find an exercise class, home workout or some daily exercises that are sustainable for you. If you have a diastasis rectus abdominis, get specialized PT to address this so your abdominals can better generate tension to stabilize you.

Abdominal exercise to do anywhere

Sit or stand in good posture. As you exhale, bring your abdominals to your spine and hold for 10 seconds while breathing normally. Rest five seconds between repetitions. Do 10-20 repetitions at a time. Can be done throughout your day, wherever you are.



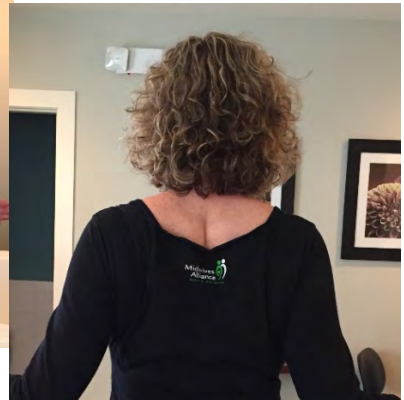
Chest stretch for posture

Place elbows on a door frame at 90 degrees and walk feet forward until you feel a stretch in your pectoral/chest muscles. Hold steady stretch for 30-60 seconds. Then, raise elbows above 90 degrees and stretch for 30-60 seconds.



Shoulder blade retraction

Stand or sit in good posture with arms at side, elbows bent to 90 degrees. Rotate your arms outward as you squeeze your shoulder blades together and downward. Hold five seconds, then return to starting position. Do intermittently through your day. This will help build muscles to keep you in better upright posture.



Reaching - HUG instead of DIVE

Non-optimal "DIVE" reach: Hands facing down, elbows out and fully extended, shoulders above 90 degrees, hinged from the hips bearing weight in toes. This puts shoulders, neck and low back at risk while leaving you prone to losing your balance forward.



More optimal "HUG" reach: Elbows are dropped downward to activate stabilizing muscles in shoulder blades and trunk. Shoulder joints are better stabilized when below 90 degrees. Sacrum is dropped downward, shifting weight through the heels to give some counterbalance as you reach forward. In this position, you can bear a load more safely or maintain a reach for an extended amount of time.



Three Points of Support

Always try to use three points of support (*ex: two feet and elbow or one knee, foot, elbow*) when doing the activities needed to support a woman in birth - leaning, kneeling, carrying a load.

