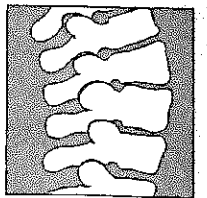


A HEALTHY SPINE



James N., a thirty-nine-year-old computer programmer, had slouched in his chair for nearly twenty years, twelve hours a day. Though he jogged five miles a day, he felt that his upper back was beginning to resemble the "Hunchback of Notre Dame," and his neck and shoulders ached severely every evening. Neither stretching exercises nor aspirin helped. Using Relaxercise, Jim was able to eliminate his neck and shoulder pain and improve his posture. By doing Relaxercise for a few minutes each day, he found that he could easily maintain a healthy, stress-free sitting posture while at work.

By the time we reach adulthood, our body's freedom of movement has often become significantly restricted. This is largely because most of our daily activities involve bending our spine in predominantly **one** direction—**forward**.

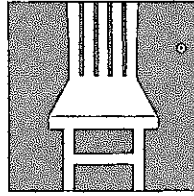
At home and at work, almost everything you do involves bending forward. Your spine's ability to move left, right, and especially backward is used less frequently. But bending freely in **all** directions is crucial to the health and comfort of your back.

Your spine is composed of two concave arches: the cervical arch of your neck and the lumbar arch of your lower back. These natural arches are essential to the flexibility of your spine and vital to its weight-bearing and shock-absorbing capabilities. It is a common misconception that a flat lower back and a straight neck comprise "good posture." These positions eliminate the important natural arches of your spine. Without healthy curves of the neck and lower back, your ligaments and discs become overstressed, your muscles become overworked, your back gets tired more easily, and you are more vulnerable to strain and injury.

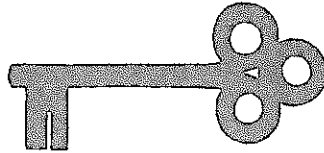
The many years of bending forward inevitably take their toll as we get older. The curves of our spine become weakened and are often completely lost. Bending backward becomes difficult and painful. This is why our posture tends to become more and more stooped in our later years.

To maintain the natural curves of your spine, you must keep your back flexible and be able to bend backward with comfort and ease. "**A Healthy Spine**" will help you to restore the health and flexibility of your spine, increase the freedom of movement in your neck and back, improve your posture, and help you bend more freely and easily in all directions.

A HEALTHY SPINE

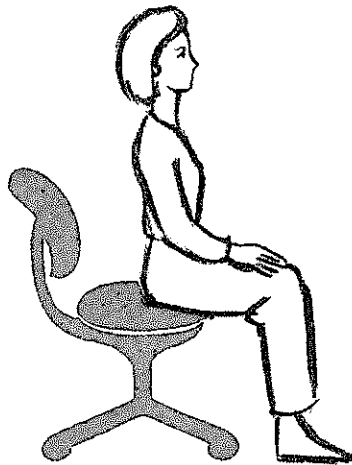


You will need a hard or firmly cushioned chair or seat.



Use the Relaxercise Keys

- Go slowly.
- Make each movement small and easy.
- Relax as much as you can.
- Rest briefly after each movement.

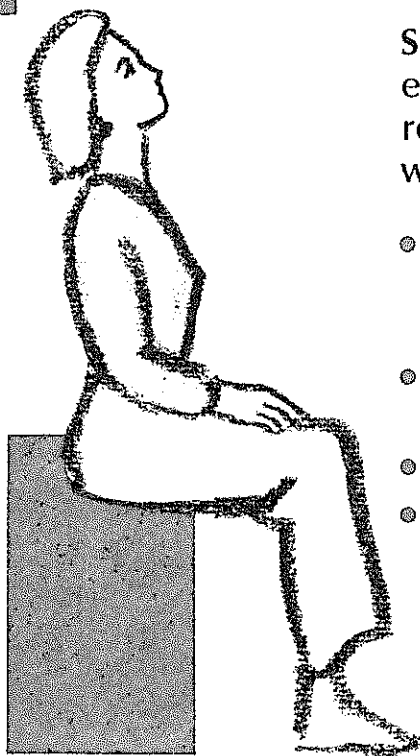


STARTING POSITION

Sit on the forward part of your chair or seat and rest your hands on your thighs. Rest your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees.

repeat each movement 4 to 8 times

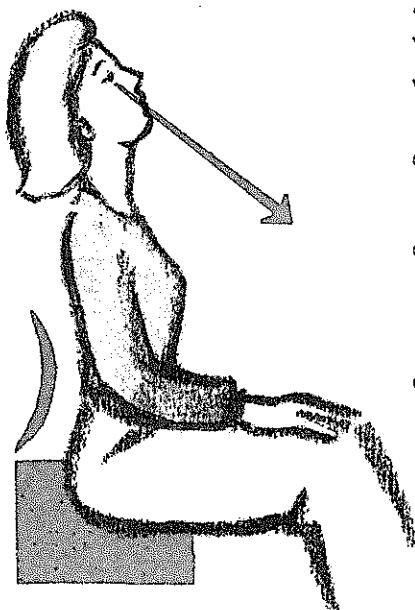
1



Slowly and comfortably raise your head and eyes as if to look up toward the ceiling. Then return to the starting position (facing forward) and relax.

- Don't stretch or strain your neck or back. Your flexibility will increase automatically.
- As you look up, let your back arch slightly.
- Exhale as you do each movement.
- As you look up, notice exactly how far above your eyes can see without feeling any strain. Later on, you can measure your improvement.

2



Simultaneously, raise your head and arch your back a little, while looking downward with your eyes.

- Go slowly. This movement will soon be easier and more comfortable.
- The movement of your head and neck is limited because your head and eyes are moving in opposite directions.
- Relax your eyes, neck, and shoulders.

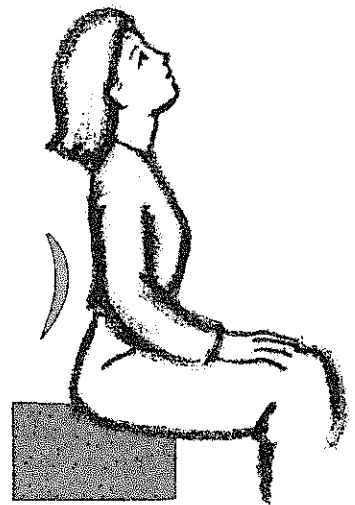
rest in the starting position after each movement

make each movement small and easy

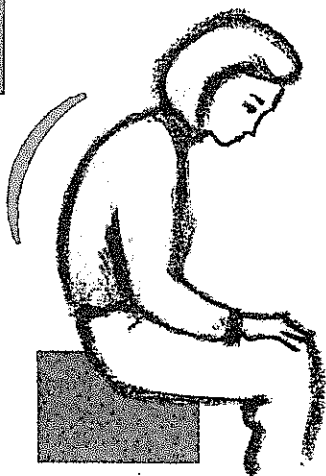
3

Simultaneously, raise your head and eyes to look up toward the ceiling while arching your back.

- Is your back arching more easily?
- Can you see a little higher without any strain?



4



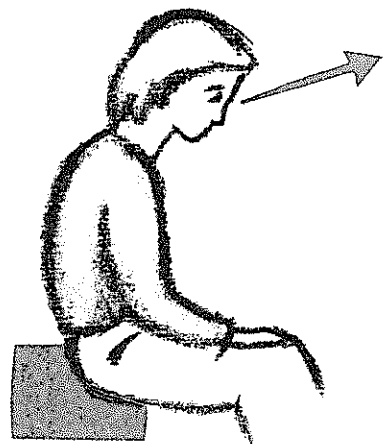
Very slowly lower your head as if to look down toward the floor. Then return to the starting position and relax.

- Make each movement small and easy.
- When you look down, let your back get round.
- Exhale as you do each movement.
- Relax your neck, chest, and shoulders.

5

Simultaneously, lower your head and round your back, while raising your eyes to look upward.

- Notice that the movement of your head and chest is limited because your head and eyes are moving in opposite directions.



go slowly so your muscles can relax

make each movement slow, relaxed and easy

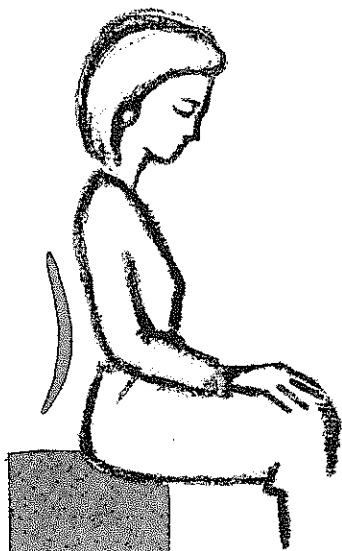
6

Again, raise your head and eyes to look upward, while arching your back.

- Notice that your eyes can see a little farther upward without strain!
- Feel the middle and upper part of your back beginning to arch a little more.



7



Let your head hang down, so your chin rests comfortably near your chest. Then slowly arch your back.

- Relax your neck, stomach, and shoulders.
- Notice that your pelvis tilts forward slightly when you arch your back.
- Exhale while doing each movement.

8

And once more, raise your head and eyes to look upward while arching your back.

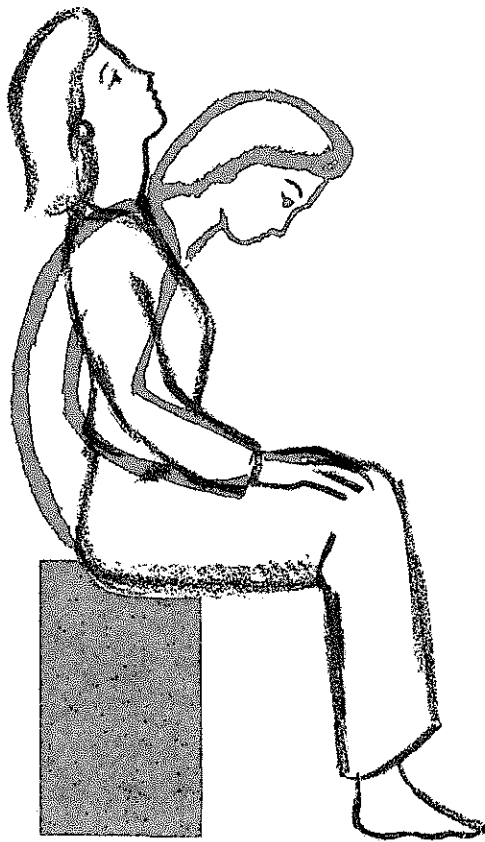
- Feel your spine arching.
- Notice how far upward you can look now, without feeling any strain.

feel the difference! and then continue . . .

alternate slowly 4 to 8 times

9

Slowly, lift your head and eyes to look upward, while arching your back. Then slowly lower your head and eyes and round your back.



As you look **upward**, notice:

- Your shoulder blades move closer together.
- Your stomach relaxes and moves forward.
- Your pelvis tilts forward a little.
- Your chest lifts and moves forward.
- Your body gets a little taller.

As you look **downward**, notice:

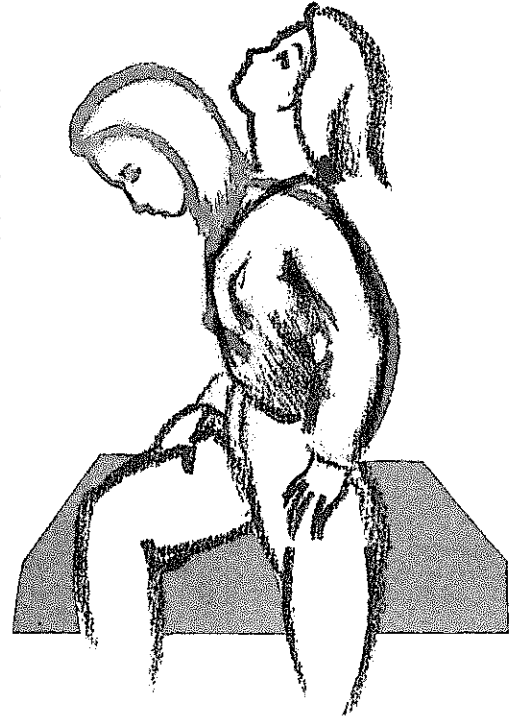
- Your chest flattens.
- Your shoulders and back are rounded.
- Your pelvis tilts backward a little.
- Your body gets a little shorter.

stop to rest as often as you like

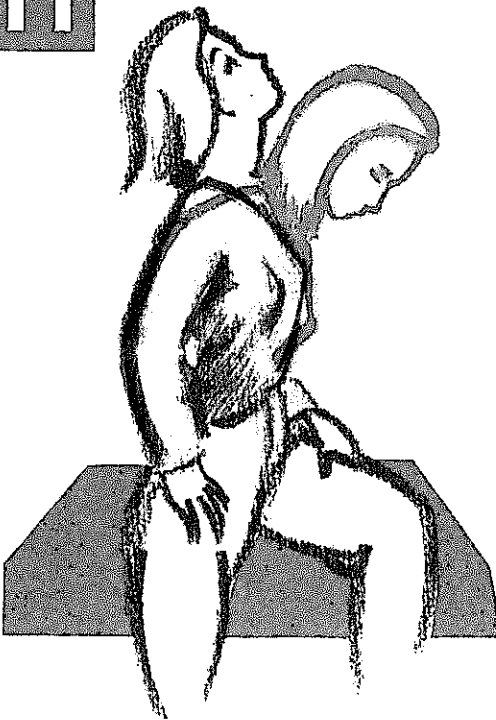
10

Turn your upper body comfortably to the right and stay there. Then alternately raise your head and eyes to look upward while arching your back, and then lower your head while rounding your back.

- Remain turned slightly to the right.
- Pause to rest when your head and eyes are lowered.
- To make the movement easier, lift your left hip slightly as you look up.
- Relax your neck, shoulders, and legs as much as possible.



11



Turn your upper body comfortably to the left and stay there. Then alternately raise your head and eyes to look upward while arching your back, and then lower your head and eyes while rounding your back.

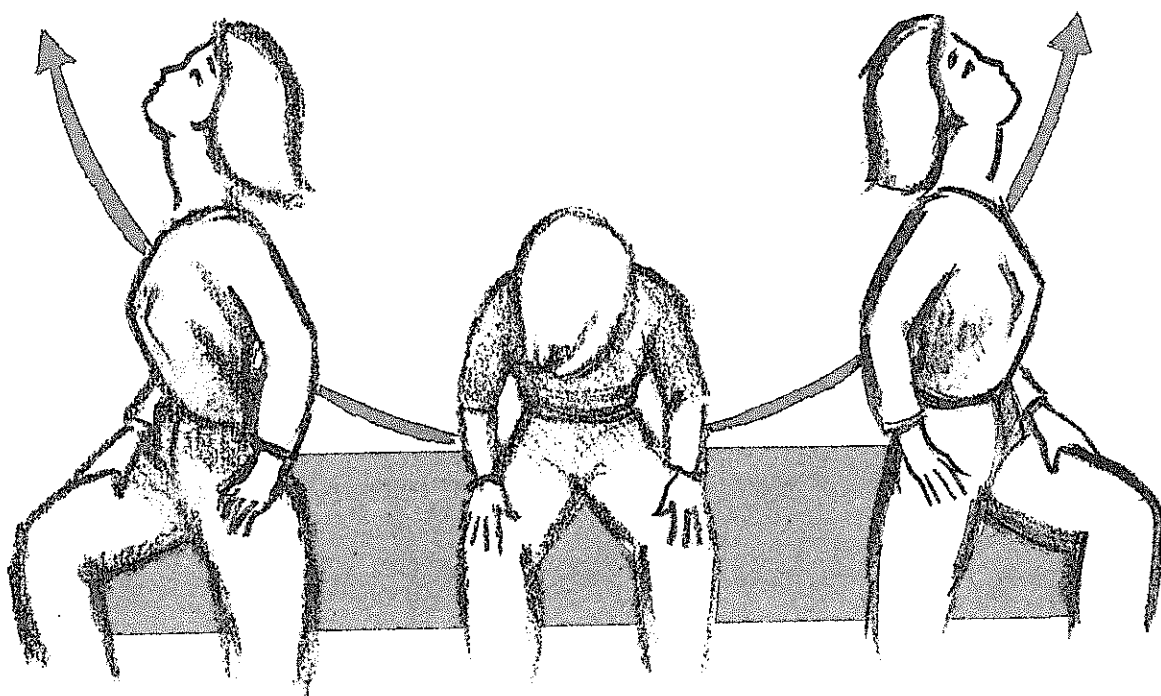
- Remain turned slightly to the left.
- As you look upward, lift your right hip slightly.
- Relax your neck, shoulders, and legs as much as you can.

make each movement slow, relaxed and easy

alternate 4 to 8 times

12

Slowly turn to the right, while arching your back and looking upward. Then, while lowering your head and rounding your back, bring your body back through the starting position and turn slowly to the left, while arching your back and looking upward. Lower your head and round your back as you bring your body through the starting position again and repeat the movement.



- This movement is smooth and continuous.
- Notice that when you turn to the right and look upward, your left hip rises a little. And when you turn to the left and look upward, your right hip rises a little.
- Notice that when you look upward, your shoulder blades move closer together. And when you look downward, your shoulder blades move farther apart.
- Arch your back as much as you can without feeling *any* strain.
- Round your back as much as you can without feeling *any* strain.

relax your entire body

let your body move freely

13



Measure your improvement:
Lift your head and eyes to
look upward while arching
your back.

- When you look up, notice how much farther you can see without *any* strain!
- Feel your entire spine bending easily!
- Feel the difference!



And now, relax.

Feel how your weight is balanced, resting comfortably on your pelvic sitting bones. Notice that your posture is more upright. Your sitting posture has improved because the natural arches of your spine have been enhanced and restored.

You have completed “**A Healthy Spine.**” When you stand up and walk around, feel the difference in your posture, flexibility, and ease of movement.

Enjoy the improvement!