

SELF-CARE: Brugger's Relief Position

Poor daily sitting posture is one of the most common causes of back and neck pain. When you sit for long periods of time, your body rounds forward and puts an enormous strain on the spine and its supporting tendons, ligaments, muscles, and fascia. The muscles in the back and back of the neck fight against gravity to pull you upright thus becoming sore, tired and knotty. The muscles in the front (chest, front of shoulders and front of neck) become shortened and tight. This posture distortion also affects breathing by compressing the diaphragm and encouraging excessive breathing from the shoulder and neck areas.

Benefits: Reduce back and neck strain, reinforces good sitting posture and relaxed breathing.

Frequency: Every 30 minutes during the workday. Hold the posture for 10-20 seconds.

Tips: Focus on keeping the body engaged yet relaxed. As you practice this position, scan your body for tension. As you inhale, feel the air travel through your nose and deep into your belly. Pause. Then feel the body relax and the tension lessen with each exhalation.

Sitting:

1. Sit or perch at the edge of your chair. You should feel the "sit bones" just around where the top of your legs meet your butt cheeks.
2. Hold your head up high. Imagine a string fixed at the crown of your head pulling you toward the sky.
3. Spread your legs slightly apart to the sides, turned out slightly.
4. Rest your weight on your legs and feet and relax your abdominal muscles.
5. Tilt your pelvis forward and raise your breastbone up.
6. Squeeze your shoulder blades together while keeping the shoulders and neck relaxed and the chin slightly tucked.
7. Palms facing forward, use your shoulders to rotate the palms slightly outward.
8. Hold this position and take slow deep "belly" breaths for 10-20 seconds.



Standing:

1. Stand tall with your head held high. Imagine a string fixed at the crown of your head pulling you toward the sky.
2. Spread your legs slightly apart to the sides and feet slightly outward.
3. Draw your belly in slightly toward your spine
4. Tilt your pelvis forward and raise your breastbone up
5. Turn your hands palms-up and your arms slightly outward, with the arms somewhat raised from your sides
6. Hold this position and take slow deep "belly" breaths for 10-20 seconds.

