

The following will review two positions for sitting. One will be sitting using the back of the chair, and the second one will be sitting forward on a chair without the use of the back of the chair for support. This technique can also be applied when sitting on a picnic bench or on bleachers.

- 1) **SUPPORTED SITTING (chair with a back):** When using the back of a chair, good sitting alignment begins with your buttocks all the way back in the chair. (If your buttocks slide forward, you will begin to round out your back.) If your chair does not offer good lumbar support, you may need to make use of a lumbar roll or fabricate your own by rolling a towel and placing it in the curve of your back. Your hips, knees, and ankles should be at about 90°. When sitting at a computer, elbows should also be at 90° and wrists should be in a neutral position. Your computer screen (or whatever you are looking at) should be at eye level or slightly below. Armrests should support your shoulder at a comfortable level, neither too high nor too low.
- 2) **UNSUPPORTED SITTING (without a back):** Come forward on your chair with the edge of your seat at approximately mid-thigh. If your hips are still at 90°, there will be a tendency to slump and round out your back. By “opening up the hip angle” greater than 90°, you will feel yourself create an arch. You can do this by bringing one foot back under the chair. If you go back and forth between these two positions (feet in the normal position, and bringing one foot back under the chair), you will feel yourself go from slumping to sitting more erect with a good lumbar curve in your low back. You can also open the hip angle greater than 90° by raising your chair seat.

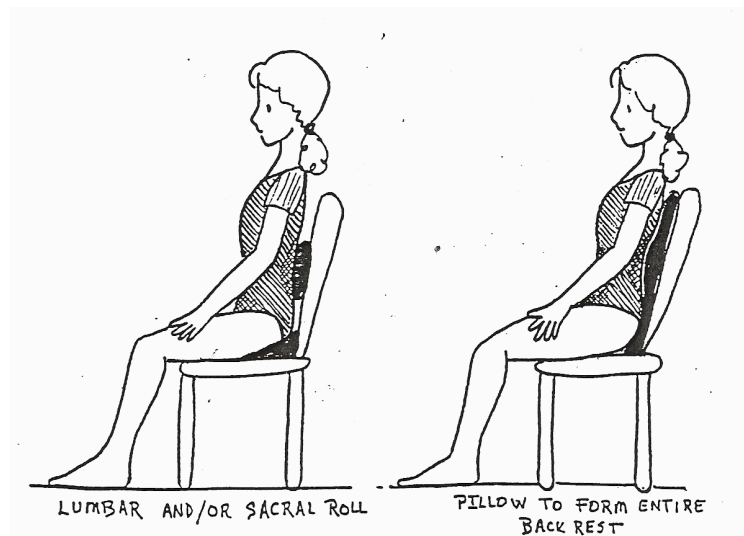
In the position with one foot brought under your chair and your back in good alignment, “hip hinge” slightly forward from the hips so that your trunk weight is supported over your pelvic floor (a triangle formed by your pubic bone and your “sits” bones) and both feet. This is a position of balance with a three-point base of support. Your stomach should feel relaxed.

Practice reaching forward and feel weight transfer onto your forward foot. You can accept weight on your foot (feet) not only when reaching forward, but also when sitting stationary. Practice this so you can feel how it helps to accept weight on the forward foot and reduce pressure on your spine. Wedges (seat cushions) can also be used to reduce pressure on your spine.

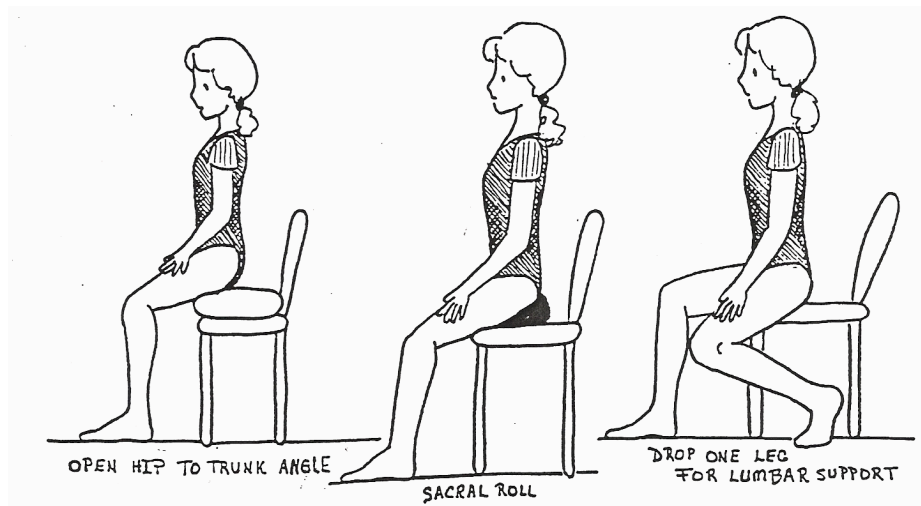
- 3) **AVOID CROSSING YOUR LEGS:** When you sit with your legs crossed your low back rounds, which weakens your core muscles. (This also happens in a slumped sitting posture). Crossing your legs also causes asymmetry in your low back and pelvic area. Also, vascular surgeons advise against crossing your legs. If you must cross your legs, crossing at the ankles is a better choice.

Remember to frequently change your sitting positions; even a good position held for a long period of time can result in stiffness and fatigue.

*Ref: Physical Therapists Gregory and Vicky Johnson
The Institute of Physical Art: BACK EDUCATION & TRAINING*



1) SUPPORTED SITTING: Usually instructions on good sitting posture are given by using the back of a chair. This is commonly used when sitting in a car, watching television, visiting with a friend. Using the back of the chair is also used when working in jobs such as data entry. However, any job that requires movement when sitting, for example reaching, can be performed better if we come forward on a chair so that we are able to “hinge from the hips” (see below), and allow our core to work in “neutral spine”, instead of rounding the back.



2) UNSUPPORTED SITTING - Coming forward on a chair is also a good way to sit and great when you have to move and reach during sitting activities, which is common when working. It is a balanced posture with some of the body weight being transferred to the legs, providing a tripod effect (weight on both legs and the pelvic floor – or where you weight bear when you ride a bike). *This is my favorite sitting position when working, because it doesn’t require a special chair or device, and it allows me to use my core when needed.

Note: sacral roll = wedge type cushion.

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