

Furniture for health

Question: What should I look for when buying furniture that will support my back?

Answer: The most important feature of any furniture piece should be spinal support. You want your furniture to conform to your spinal curves and not have your spine conform to your couch or chair. Firm is best but soft leather upholstery can still be comfortable and supportive.

Be careful with recliners. It is very easy to relax or even fall asleep on an angle that feel great but puts all your weight bearing on your low back. If you have a history or active problem with your low back it can activate or irritate your condition. Elevating your feet is excellent as long as your back is straight and supported. Using a small pillow behind the back can be helpful to support the lordotic (forward "C" curve) of the lumbar spine.

Chairs that are too soft and cushy allow your buttocks to sink too low and don't support the back. Armrests are always helpful to relieve arm and upper back tension. A small pillow behind the neck, as long as it doesn't push the head forward, can relieve and relax neck pain. Reading in bed should be avoided because when we get tired we slouch and contort into awkward, unhealthy postures.

Remember the spine has three curves and all should be supported when either sitting or lying down.

Quote of the week: "I would rather appreciate things I cannot have than to have things I am not able to appreciate." – Elbert Hubbard