



Mind Your Posture: Indoors with your baby

Choosing your cot

Although there are many different types, colours and styles of cots, there are a few simple ways in which you can make sure that the one you choose is the right one for your baby, as well as for you and your partner's backs!

- Choosing a cot that will fit into the baby's room seems like an obvious statement but make sure that when it is in place there is plenty of room for you to access the key areas without needing to twist or strain.
- Find a cot which has sides that drop down to several levels and which has a base that moves up and down. This allows you to access the cot more easily and, as your baby grows, you can adjust the height they sleep at to keep them safe.
- The less you have to lift and lean to put your child into the cot, the better. A 5kg weight at your chest equates to five times that amount at arms length so placing your child in the cot, whilst keeping them as close as possible to you, is best for your back. In other words, you should be placing them straight across onto the mattress, rather than lifting up and over high side bars. Remember, you will be doing this thousands of times!
- Securing the cot to the floor or wall is a good idea as toddlers can stand and rock the cot causing it to tip and, either injure your child or you as you dash to prevent it falling.

Feeding

- Whether breast or bottle feeding, find a comfortable posture. Your arms should not be bearing the baby's weight, so extra pillows or something like a 'V' pillow is a good idea.
- It is not uncommon for mums and dads to get neck strain from bending and twisting their necks to check that the baby is feeding properly. If this is a problem for you, install a mirror in front of your feeding chair or sit with a portable mirror in front of you, as this allows you to see what is happening, without putting a constant strain on your neck muscles.
- If you are able to, change position regularly.
- Don't forget that alternating feeding sides is a good idea when bottle feeding too, as it evenly spreads any strain.
- Feeding a child in a high chair can place strain on your back. Sit as close as possible in front of your child and adjust the height of the chair so that you are not leaning too high or too low.

Playing

- Get down to your child's level, rather than bending over.
- If sitting on the floor to play with your baby/toddler, try sitting on a cushion to help support your back and keep your back straight.
- Avoid spending too long kneeling down as this can put pressure on the knees. If you are kneeling, keep your back straight.
- In any position, it is easy to get absorbed in what you and your child are doing. Try to remember to change position regularly.
- Don't bend to pick up toys, bend your knees. Watch your child and observe the natural squatting posture they use to pick things up!

General Posture Advice

- **The fitter you are and the more muscle tone you have the less likely you are to injure yourself. Talk to your chiropractor, GP or other healthcare provider for advice on exercises to develop your core strength.**
- **Parents of babies and children inevitably carry heavy bags! Using a rucksack style bag is best as you can spread the weight evenly across your back. Check the straps are tightened so that the load is held against your back.**
- **Avoid high heels and wear comfortable, supportive shoes.**
- **If you have children already, it can be difficult if they need lifting and carrying. Always lift with your spine straight and bend knees to avoid leaning, stretching or bending.**
- **Simple activities such as stretching and shoulder shrugging can all help to keep your back in line.**
- **Do not sit for prolonged periods, take a regular break and, when sitting, let the seat take your weight and, if possible, keep as much of your body in contact with the chair so that your whole body is supported. Knees should be lower than your hips.**

Follow mum and chiropractor Louise Hampton on her blog:

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Further information about chiropractic can be obtained from

www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk

For further information contact the
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