

# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

★ "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" II COR. 3:17 ★ 50 CENTS ★ STATE EDITION

## HEALTHYLIVING

SECTION E ♦ THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR ♦ TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2007 ♦ INDYSTAR.COM/HEALTH



**Dr. Stephen Ritter, the first spine specialist at Methodist Sports Medicine / The Orthopedic Specialists, shares ...**

### How to improve posture, lessen back pain

**> Get up and move** As muscles tire, slouching, slumping and other poor postures become more likely, putting extra pressure on neck and back. Change positions frequently and take a break every half hour from sitting to stretch, stand or walk.

**> Sit up/stand up straight** Stand with your weight distributed equally on both feet, and tighten your stomach muscles — even when sitting. Avoid unbalanced postures, such as crossing legs, hunching shoulders forward or tilting your head.

**> Give your body "props"** Supportive "props" help take strain off your spine. Use ergonomic office chairs, footrests, portable lumbar back supports or even a towel or small pillow while sitting and driving.

**> Exercise** Regular exercise such as walking, swimming or bicycling helps your body stay aerobically conditioned, while strengthening exercises keep the muscles surrounding your back strong.

**> Support your feet** Don't wear high-heeled shoes too often — they detract from your back support and posture.

**> Kick the habit** If you smoke or drink a lot of alcohol, you increase your chances of back and neck pain. You also accelerate degenerative changes in your spine, upping the likelihood of osteoporosis.

**> Get check-ups** Have regular spinal check-ups. It's much easier to prevent a problem than to correct one. For more information visit [www.methodistsports.com](http://www.methodistsports.com).

— Barb Ramonatz