



## KEEPING YOUR BACK STRONG AND HEALTHY - GRANDPARENTS



Caring for young children can be very physically demanding on your body. Joint and muscular pain is common as we age and conditions such as arthritis can be easily flared up by increased strain on the joints.

### **Musculoskeletal changes that occur with age:**

- Reduced strength and size of muscles
- Reduced bone strength/density
- Poor posture
- Reduced balance

### **Back Care:**

Caring for your grandchildren often requires lifting and bending which can result in low back pain. To protect your back, you should take care with activities such as:

- Lifting babies, toddlers and prams.
- Carrying a child for more than a few meters at a time.
- Bending and twisting when lifting a child.

Here are a few tips to assist you in avoiding or minimizing picking up a child you are caring for:

### **Encourage the child to be more independent**

- Assist the child to climb in and out of the bath and high chair by holding onto their hands.
- Place a chair/stool beside the cot (with the side down) and get them to climb onto the chair/stool then into the cot.
- Help them in and out of the car by assisting from behind with a hand under their bottom (i.e: climb onto the floor, onto the seat, and then into the car seat).

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### Get down to their level

- Instead of picking the child up to cuddle/console, squat down or get onto your knees to do so.
- Sit on the couch and ask your grandchild to climb up for a cuddle.
- Try changing nappies on the bed, sitting or kneeling beside the bed, rather than lifting the child onto the change table

### Establish regular “quiet” time

- Try to establish a regular daily “quiet” time with the child (e.g: both resting on the bed/couch “reading” a book).



### Pelvic Floor Care

As you age, the pelvic floor muscles, just like all the other muscles in the body need extra care. It is important to protect these muscles when lifting babies and toddlers as well as when pushing a pram. Don't forget to do your pelvic floor exercises each day to help maintain strength and continence.

### General Fitness

By keeping your body fit and strong, you are more likely to maintain your health, slow down the age-related changes and prevent injuries.

Consult a Physiotherapist at Fitwise to have an assessment and an individual program prescribed.

- ❖ This information is a general overview. It is not intended to be diagnostic and must be considered in conjunction with the individual's complete medical history and a comprehensive physical examination. Individuals with pain should contact their doctor and / or the Australian Physiotherapy Association to find a local physiotherapist to assist with their management.

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