

Are You Sitting Comfortably: Part 1

What position does my bottom land in a chair when I am sitting?

Do we ever think about how we sit down? Most people just plonk their bottoms into a chair, not really thinking about how the bottom actually lands in the chair. If you are sitting for any period of time, how you have laid the foundation of sitting is important both for your comfort, and to reduce the onset of achiness or pain in the back. If you are getting discomfort when sitting for periods of time, try the following and see whether you are indeed plonking your bottom in to the 'wrong' position.

There are key questions we need to consider when looking at the action sitting from standing. Do we tuck our bottom under when we sit (as if we are smoothing a skirt under our bottoms prior to sitting, rolling the pelvis backwards and losing the natural curve of the low back)? Do we stick our bottom out when we go to sit down? Do we twist the pelvis in one direction or the other as we sit? Do we have the movement available in the hips to sit on the seat height that we have chosen to sit upon (covered in Are You Sitting Comfortably Part 3)? Let's cover these one by one.



Skirt smoothers are predisposed to starting sitting life in a poor position. By tucking the pelvis underneath us as we sit, we are naturally rolling our landing position such that we are sitting on the fleshy part of our bottom rather than the 'sitting' bones of the pelvis. This tilts the pelvis backwards; the low back gets pushed into the chair back. The progression into a slump sitting position is faster and easier. Not ideal!

Bottom sticker-outers have the advantage. By sticking your bottom out as you sit, the pelvis is placed in a better position to land on the sitting bones rather than the fleshy part of the bottom. However, while it is a better method, it is important to know whether we are landing square in the chair or twisted.



This is advice about how to sit. Everybody's body is different so if you are still having pain or discomfort, or trying to sit better gives you pain or discomfort please contact us for an assessment.

e:info@thebodymechanics.co.uk

t:01932253500



How do we know if we are going from standing to sitting in a twist? We can look at the movement in a mirror looking for visual clues and use our hands on our hips to feel whether a twist is occurring. If we are sitting in a twist through the pelvis, the twist continues into the upper body and puts the joints in the lower back into a position that can cause pain / discomfort. This discomfort often radiates to one side or the other rather than being central low back pain.

Here is an overview of what we are looking for when assessing the movement in clinic:

1. Do the knees stay the same width apart as we squat? Does one knee move inwards towards the other? Visual clue to a possible twist.
2. Is the bottom being pushed backwards (sticking out) or tucking under as we squat? Side on in the mirror for this one but you will also feel it in your hands if you are holding on to your pelvic bones.
3. Is the torso turning as we squat? Look in the mirror – the lower torso will follow the pelvis.
4. When we are sitting, look at the knees, is one further forward than the other?

What do I do next? If you have checked your movements and know how your body is moving into a squat and therefore how you are moving from standing to sitting, we can understand how to sit in the best position possible. Make sure you are sticking your bottom out, not tucking your bottom underneath you as you sit. If you are twisting, when you land in the chair, 'booty scooch' your bottom into the right position (covered in Are you Sitting Comfortably Part 2). The next thought is whether your chair suits your hips and their available movement (covered in Are You Sitting Comfortably Part 3). Then you are ready to think about what is happening in your upper body.....

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