



Protect Your Back While You Wrap

by Dr. Dean McCaughan

Christmas is upon us, and this means a lot of gift wrapping. Unfortunately, back pain can often take the joy out of wrapping those gifts. Be careful not to aggravate your back by following these easy steps:

Plan your work.

Keep your wrapping supplies together and organized. That way, when you are in the middle of wrapping a gift and you suddenly need tape, scissors or ribbon, you aren't reaching or stretching into awkward positions. Not only will this protect your back, it will also save time, reduce frustration and minimize re-wrapping.

Use an appropriate work space.

Avoid working on the floor. Wrapping gifts on the floor seems like a good idea when you start – you have ample space to spread out – but this will put you in a poor ergonomic position for wrapping all those gifts. Instead, work at a table where you can sit comfortably. Or, use a table that is about waist high that you can stand at. This will allow you to work over your project with minimal strain to your back.

Get help with those heavy boxes.

We all love to receive that special big box. Sometimes even more fun than giving a huge gift, is wrapping it! Just remember to get a partner to help you with those large difficult boxes.

Take your time.

Many of the issues we encounter with our back is because we are rushing. Plan ahead so you don't have to hurry.

Take breaks.

Even if you are only wrapping small packages, the wear and tear of working without occasional rests will begin to strain your back. Be sure to take breaks, get up from your table (switch that Christmas CD and grab some warm cider) and

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stretch. This will help prevent you from getting stiff in your lower back and tight across your shoulders.

If you experience persistent back pain even after following these simple steps, this might be a sign of an underlying problem that your chiropractor can address. Often problems will come and go, only to resurface when you exert yourself again. The sooner an issue like this is addressed, the better the prospect is for a speedy and more satisfying resolution.

Midlands Health Center is a multi-disciplinary clinic that blends both chiropractic and medical care to better address your health concerns. A graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic, Dr. Dean McCaughan has practiced in South Carolina and Iowa, and cared for patients during chiropractic mission trips to Nepal and Fiji.

Midlands Health Center is at 3106 Devine Street, Columbia. Call (803) 252-2255 or visit MidlandsHealth.com. See ad page 21.