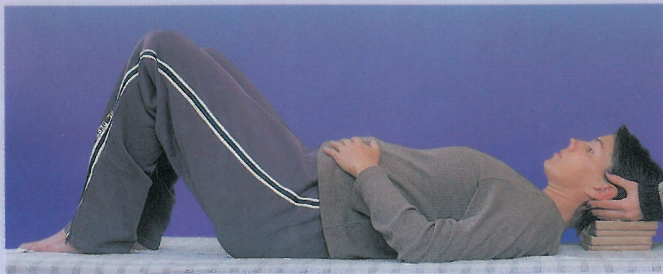


### When lying down:

- Lie on the floor on your back, with your head resting on an inch or so of paperback books. Keep your feet flat on the floor and your knees bent.
- Allow your lower back to release gently towards the floor by imagining your knees are pushing upwards.
- Keep your arms relaxed and your hands resting lightly on your ribcage. Lying like this, for 20 minutes or so, is wonderful for the back because it allows it to rest and regain its length.

These should only be done up to the sixth month of pregnancy. Roll on your side if lying on your back is uncomfortable.



Pile up the pillows when you're lying down to provide support where it's needed.



This semi-supine position is excellent for re-aligning the body. Some women are able to use this position throughout their pregnancies.

### When standing:

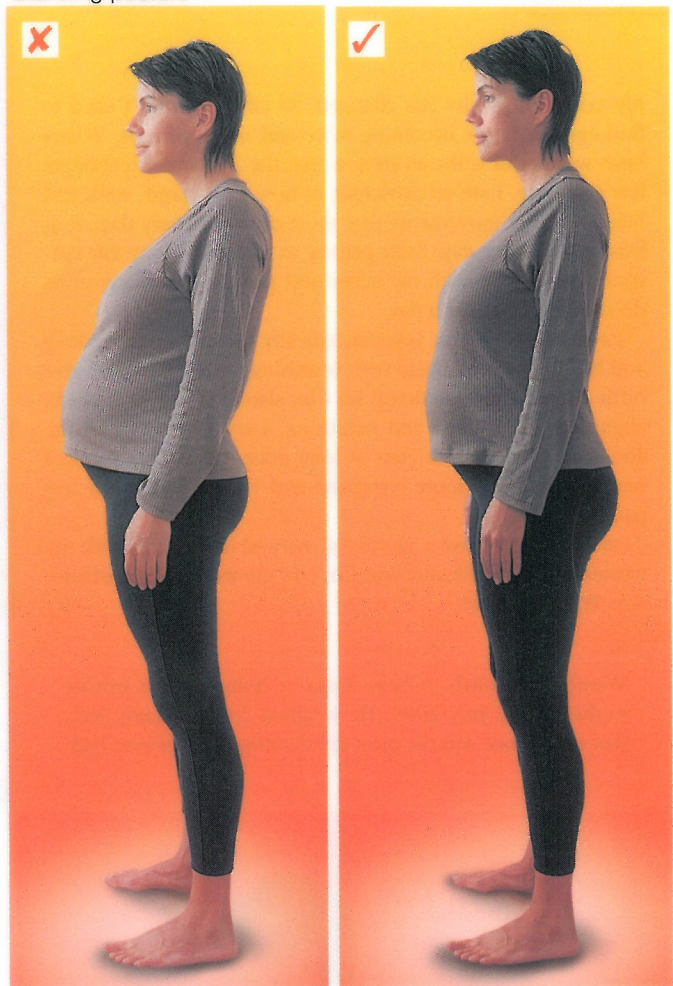
- Keep your leg joints relaxed. Locking the hip joints will cause tension in the lower back and encourage you to stick out your bump. Freeing the knees and ankles enables you to have a sense of balance, so that as your weight shifts and changes, you can adjust without tensing up. Think of the backs of the legs as being flexible, not rigid.
- Keep the weight of the head in alignment with the shoulders and pelvis. As your bump grows, you will have to shift your centre of gravity, but keeping the head free at the top of the spine will make this easier.
- Imagine the spine is flowing upwards, the arms loose and relaxed as they hang at the shoulders. Also think of lengthening the front of your body.

### When bending and lifting:

- Always free your neck before your bend.
- Keep your spine long and tall, bend at your hips, knees and ankles, not your back.
- When lifting, let your arms hang from your shoulders, then lift from the legs.

Find out more in *The Alexander Technique For Pregnancy and Birth* by Brita Forsstrom and Mel Hampson (Victor Gollancz, 1995) or contact Noeline Levinson on (011) 787 2622.

### Standing posture



This posture places strain on the lower back, which is pushed forward. The knees are locked, and the neck is pushed forward.

Here the back and internal organs are protected, with the legs taking the bulk of the extra weight.

### Looking good, feeling great

Stunning SA singer Wendy Oldfield tells us how the Alexander technique works for her.

"When I was younger, I was in an accident which damaged my coccyx, and years later, in my late 20s, I developed an aching back and hip. After many visits to the physio and chiropractor I realised that to correct the injury I would have to work hard to reclaim the posture I needed to feel good and whole.

"I began using the Alexander technique three years ago, and the first thing that changed was the way in which I hold my body. This in turn affected my self esteem – I felt good physically so my performance also improved. Slowly but surely my backache also got better.

"With the knowledge of my pregnancy (I'm now 35 weeks), I continued using the Alexander technique with great enthusiasm. Being so aware of my back condition and listening to all the negative reports of how one suffers during pregnancy, I was determined not to be one of the victims of pregnancy backache.

"Using the Alexander technique, I concentrate on positioning my body according to my own body weight and height. And being pregnant means that I have to be careful about balance.