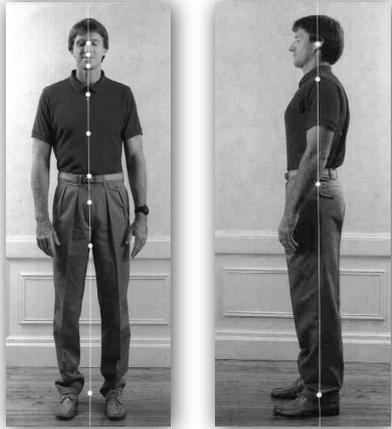


Good Posture



Why Do We Need Perfect Posture?

The human body, is subject to balance, rhythm, timing and the coordinated actions of all its components. For this reason, correct posture enables the body to function more efficiently, allowing for proper development. Your body must adapt to the constant stress of gravity in order to maintain its balance, and poor posture is a common result.

While the effects of poor posture can be serious, many problems can be corrected. If you or a member of your family has what appears to be a postural problem, you should seek advice of a doctor of chiropractic.

Poor Posture V's Good Posture

There are many reasons for poor posture and usually they are found in combination. Among many causes are the following:

- ❖ Emotional problems such as depression
- ❖ Visual problems
- ❖ Excessive weight/Improper nutrition
- ❖ Foot problems or improper shoes
- ❖ Weak muscles, muscle imbalance
- ❖ Laziness

- ❖ Poor sleep support or sleep position
- ❖ Injury to muscles, ligaments, tendons or bones
- ❖ Negative mental and physical attitudes
- ❖ Recurrent occupational stress and position
- ❖ Scoliosis
- ❖ Spinal and pelvic misalignment

Some benefits of correct posture are:

- ✓ Improved health, appearance and coordination
- ✓ Increased strength and stamina
- ✓ Your clothes fit better
- ✓ You have more confidence and better body balance
- ✓ Reduced possibility of injury
- ✓ Improved physical and mental development.

When you stand tall, walk tall, and sit tall, your body works most efficiently.

It is important to maintain proper posture for general health, but also while performing different tasks throughout your day.

★ When lifting, bend at your knees, keep your back straight, feet shoulder-width apart, and one foot slightly forward for balance. Hold the load close to your body, then stand and lift with the strong muscles of your legs.

★ When standing for long periods of time, rest your foot on a stool, occasionally alternating your feet.

★ When sitting, raise your viewing surface (i.e. computer screen) to eye level. Use a chair that provides good support for the curves in your back and neck. Take frequent breaks to stretch and revive.

★ When sleeping, use a firm mattress and sleep on your side or your back with a supportive pillow for your neck.

How Is Your Posture

When a chiropractor analyses your spine he is looking at two major areas of concern: one is the function of your spine, how it works, moves etc. The other is the structure or posture of your spine.

When the body is positioned correctly there is minimal strain on the muscles, ligaments, bones, and joints, your internal organs are not

compressed, blood vessels are not pressed, nerves are not irritated. This allows your body to function at it's best. This balanced position causes the least strain on your spine and it's supporting muscles and ligaments.

Increasing the stress and strain on your spine in this way can contribute significantly to a number of painful or limiting dysfunctions in your spine.

Common Posture Problems

Uneven or Rotated Hips

Uneven Hips affects the pelvic, lumbar and thoracic areas of the spine..

Spending much of the day with your **legs crossed** can contribute to developing this condition, as can activities like **carrying children on one hip,**

getting babies in and out of car seats, balancing shopping bags or carrying unbalanced loads in the garden.

Long term **uneven hip posture** can lead to **muscle imbalances and stress** on the lumbar spine, sacrum and pelvis.

Misalignments of the lumbar spine can affect the proper functioning of the nerves, which can **lead to numbness, tingling and associated pain.** The lumbar nerves connect directly to vital organs , tissues and cells; like the bladder, kidneys, reproductive organs and the muscles and ligaments



of the legs and feet. So it's important to minimise and reduce stress to these areas of the spine for total well-being.

Forward Head Posture

Forward Head Posture (FHP) can be recognised by the positioning of the **ear being forward of the shoulder, rather than sitting directly over it.**

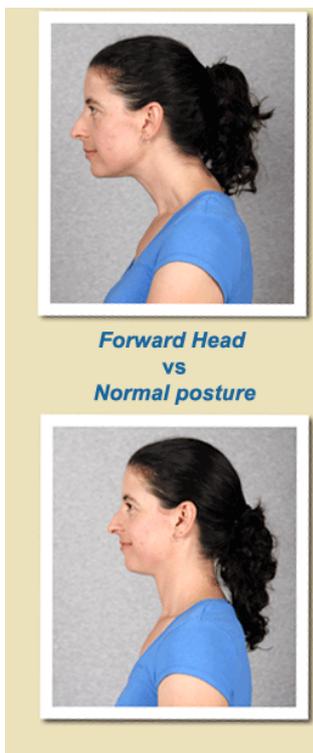
Poor neck posture leads to a Forward Head Position which is one of the most common causes of neck, head and shoulder tension and pain. This can be a result of long term habits of “slumping” at the computer, whilst driving, sitting poorly on the couch, or poor sleeping posture.

These habits can be worsened if strains and sprains of the neck have occurred in the past which has weakened the neck muscles.

Imagine how uncomfortable it would be to hang a bowling ball around your neck. Well this is exactly what your body might be experiencing every day if you suffer Forward Head Posture.

For every inch your head posture sits forward, the head gains 4.5kgs (10 pounds) in weight.

This forces the muscles in your upper back and neck to work much harder to keep the head (chin) from dropping forwards onto your chest. With your muscles in constant contraction to achieve this, pressure is added to the nerves at the base of the skull, which can cause headaches.



Forward Head Posture is a very common postural issue, and it is estimated to occur in between 66% and 90% of the population.

An increased forward head posture has been **strongly associated with decreased respiratory muscle strength** in patients, which can **affect the ability to breath** and **reduce lung capacity by as much as 30%**.

Forward head posture has also been **linked to tension-type headaches**, with the degree of forward head posture having a direct correlation with duration and frequency of headaches, as well as increased blood pressure. Long term forward head posture leads to muscle strain, disc herniations, arthritis, pinched nerves and instability. Abnormal neck posture has also been **associated with headaches, abnormal functions of the eyes and the ears, and psychological and mental disorders.**

Awareness of the correct neck and shoulder posture is the first step toward correction. A great way to start correcting poor neck posture is through **exercises which are designed to help gain control over postural neck muscles** which have become weak and fatigued over time.

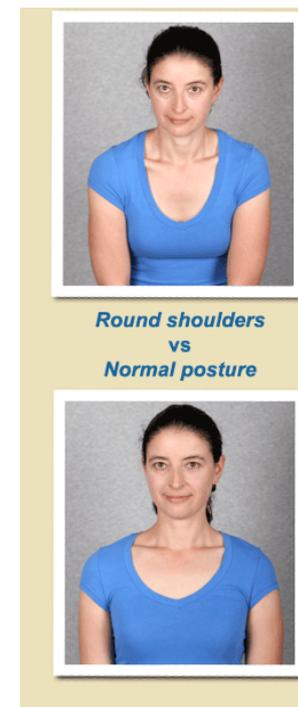
Round Shoulders

It's estimated that up to **73% of the population are affected by 'round shoulder'** posture and common complaints resulting from this condition is an increased incidence of pain between the shoulder blades.

Rounded shoulders are usually the result of slouching. Prolonged slouching can strain the muscles between the shoulder blades, causing upper back pain. When slouching, the natural forward curve of the neck is also exaggerated, which can also result in neck pain. It is more common to slouch when sitting. Slouching is often caused by fatigue, especially when sitting in front

of a computer.

Round shoulder also **compresses your diaphragm, which leads to shallow breathing.** Proper posture allows proper breathing and sufficient oxygen intake. Getting enough oxygen helps to relax muscles and prevents stress from building up in the muscles, especially the muscles of the neck and back. Tense muscles are a common cause of back pain and neck pain.



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