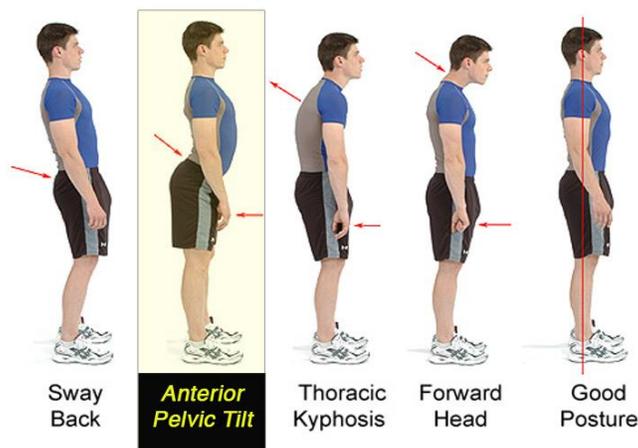


Good Form, Good Function, Good Health

"Sit up straight!" "Don't slouch!" I'm sure we've all heard those words more than once from our mother and from your favorite PT when being referred for back or neck pain. Believe it or not, there is a reason behind this madness and we are here to help!

What is **good posture** anyway and why is it so important? Basically posture refers to the body's alignment and positioning with respect to the ever-present force of gravity. Whether we are standing, sitting or lying down gravity exerts a force on our joints, ligaments and muscles. Good posture entails distributing the force of gravity through our body so no one structure is overstressed.



Posture affects how you walk, run, jump, **lift weights** and every day activities. Because of its many benefits, such as ease of movement, **good balance** of muscle strength and **flexibility**, proper positioning of the spine and proper functioning of internal organs, your body “feels” good and then you feel good! Doesn't everyone want to feel good? 😊

As if hearing it from your mom or again, your favorite PT wasn't enough, here are a few reasons why good posture is good for you:

1. Portrays a better, more confident image.

Good posture will boost self-confidence. Try this: in front of a mirror, take a deep breath and stand straight. Then slump over with poor posture. Repeat a few times. See the difference!? Think of the people around you that you “see” as confident. Many of the people I think of do stand tall and have very good posture. It definitely portrays confidence.

2. Breathing becomes easier and deeper.

In doctor's offices we are often asked to sit up straight while listening to lung sounds. This rarely has permanent effect because by the time someone needs to be reminded

to do so, their body has adapted to be more comfortable in the slouching position. When they attempt to sit up “straight” they actually tighten the already over-shortened frontal muscles and tendons and this causes restrictions in the ease of breathing volume; tightening these muscles even slightly to make oneself more erect causes tightness in the entire upper body and reduces the ease of [deeper breathing](#).

3. Improves circulation and digestion.

When it comes to the digestive system, proper posture allows the internal organs in the abdomen to assume their natural position without undue compression, which can interfere with the normal flow and function of the gastrointestinal apparatus. An improper, slouched posture has been assumed to be a contributing factor to several digestive problems from acid reflux to constipation and even hernias.

4. Makes you look slimmer and younger.

When having a good posture you will instantly take off 3-5 lbs in your appearance. It will also make you look slimmer, younger and your clothes will look better. YES!! That is the easiest way to shed 5 lbs if you ask me!

5. Help your muscles and joints.

Good posture helps us keep bones and joints in correct alignment so that our muscles are used correctly, decreasing the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces that could result in degenerative arthritis and joint pain. It also reduces the stress on the ligaments holding the spinal joints together, minimizing the likelihood of injury. A good posture allows muscles to work more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy and, therefore, preventing muscle fatigue. It also helps prevent muscle strain, overuse disorders, and even back and muscular pain.

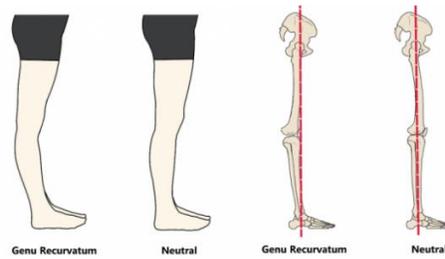
6. Change your frame of mind.

Posture also affects your frame of mind and your frame of mind can affect your posture. So, when you are well, feeling happy and on top of things, posture tends to be upright and open. In contrast, people who are depressed and in chronic pain, often sit or stand slumped.

Next time you feel depressed or you're anxious about something try changing your posture, stand up straight and breathe deeply. Good posture in sitting and standing makes it easier to breathe fully and naturally, helping both relaxation and concentration, many Eastern practices such as yoga and tai-chi work on posture.

7. Healthy spine

Proper posture is a simple but very important way to keep the many intricate structures in the back and spine healthy. Back support is especially important for people who spend many hours sitting in an office chair or standing throughout the day.



****When the knees hyperextend (lock back) the tibia, fibula, and femur move backward at the knee and the femur moves forward at the top of the thigh. This forward movement of the thigh pulls the pelvis with it, often, but not always, tucking it under. The spine is pulled out of alignment accordingly and the result is often a very subtle compression at the back of both the lumbar (low back) and cervical spine (neck). Just the subtle change of standing with your knees slightly bent can make a difference if you are experiencing back pain.

Remember, your spine is your life line, so please take care of it!

So the take away is.....

- Not maintaining good posture and adequate back support can add strain to muscles and put stress on the spine. Over time, the stress of poor posture can change the anatomical characteristics of the spine, leading to the possibility of constricted blood vessels and nerves.
- Sitting and standing with proper postural alignment will allow one to work more efficiently with less fatigue and strain on your body's ligaments and muscles. Being aware of good posture is the first step to breaking old poor postural habits and reducing stress and strain on your spine. So do what your mama told ya and "Sit Up Straight!"