

Importance of Good Posture



Good posture is important to your overall health and offers a variety of benefits including reduced back pain, increased energy, and greater confidence, and can help you avoid muscle tension, pain, fatigue, and many other common ailments and medical conditions. It's never too late to correct or make improvements to your posture, especially if it's contributing to one or more health problems.

Read on to learn more about the benefits of good posture and how you can improve your posture and treat related health conditions.

What Are the Benefits of Good Posture?

Having good posture comes with various health advantages—many of which are physical, and some of which are psychological.

Reduced Back Pain

Incorrect posture is one of the top risk factors of low back pain, affecting [more than 25%](#) of the working population every year. Sitting in a slouched position for long periods can put excess pressure on discs, ligaments, and muscles in the spine to cause low back pain. Practicing good posture even when sitting can greatly reduce your risk of developing back pain.

Fewer Headaches

Muscle tension in the neck and upper back caused by poor posture can often lead to headaches. Tension headaches are the most common type of headache and are characterized by feelings of pressure, tightness, and dull, throbbing pain around the forehead or at the neck and back of the head. Yoga and stretching can often help relieve tension headaches, though addressing poor posture may eliminate these headaches for good.

Higher Lung Capacity

Slouching and incorrect posture can cause the lungs to compress to result in labored breathing and reduced respiratory function. Practicing good posture can often increase your lung capacity to make breathing easier. Cardio exercises such as walking, running, and swimming may also become easier because of improved breathing with good posture.

Higher Energy Levels

Having poor posture can make you feel fatigued and less energetic due to the way it hinders blood circulation and throws bones and joints out of alignment. Good blood circulation is necessary for oxygen and nutrients to reach your cells, where they can be used for energy. Properly aligned bones and joints contribute to optimal muscle functioning, which can help you feel more energetic and less tired.

Better Form When Exercising

Good posture will allow you to practice proper form when exercising, which reduces your risk for injuries. For example, doing squats while slouching or curving your back can increase chronic lower back pain risk. Your physical gains and workout results will also be more achievable and noticeable if your posture and alignment are properly formed.

Increased Confidence

Having good posture can, directly and indirectly, affect your confidence and the way you feel about your physical appearance. For instance, good posture can boost your energy levels and empower you to become more active and social.

Good posture can also make you look taller, slimmer, and more muscular. A study published in the journal [*PLoS One*](#) showed that good posture could improve negative thoughts and emotions in women who feel dissatisfied with their bodies and make them feel more confident.

What Does It Mean To Have Good Posture?

Good posture is about making sure your entire body is properly aligned from an asymmetrical standpoint at any given time, especially when sitting, standing, and lying down. Practicing good posture comes naturally for many people, though certain lifestyle behaviors and habits can gradually affect posture. For example, those who lean forward in their chairs for long periods when on the computer or playing video games may be more prone to developing incorrect posture.

Here's how to practice good posture when sitting, standing, and lying down.

Sitting

Place your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest to prevent them from dangling mid-air. Keep your ankles in front of your knees and try to avoid sitting with your legs crossed. Keep your knees below the hips or at hip-level and away from the edge of the chair. Relax your shoulders, and make sure your chair fully supports your middle and lower back.

Standing

Stand up to your full height while keeping your back straight. To ensure you are doing this correctly, imagine someone is pulling you up toward the ceiling by the top of your head. Keep your knees slightly bent, and avoid locking your knees.

Let your arms hang naturally, and tuck in your stomach while keeping your core muscles engaged. Position your legs shoulder-width apart, and balance your weight slightly on the front of your feet as opposed to your heels. Keep your head level, and try to avoid pushing it back, forward, or to the side.

Lying Down

Lying on your side is usually the best position to ensure good posture, as it avoids putting excess pressure on your back. If you find the side-sleeping position uncomfortable, try placing a pillow between your knees to align your spine.

Avoid sleeping on your stomach, as this position may worsen back pain. Your doctor can also give you tips on finding the best sleeping position for you based on your posture, weight, and any existing sleep disorders.

How Can I Improve My Posture?

Certain habits and behaviors can help you improve your posture over time until it starts to feel more natural. Here are several tips that can help you improve your posture.

- Start exercising regularly, as exercise can increase bone and muscle strength, naturally reduce pain, and stabilize your spine. If you need help learning proper forms and techniques, watch tutorial videos or work with a fitness trainer.
- Create an ergonomic workspace that protects your back and prevents any tension headaches. Position your computer monitor directly in front of your face, and follow the directions that came with your office desk or chair to place them in ergonomic positions that work best for you.
- Limit the amount of time you spend bending down, which can place extra stress on the spine. Reorganize your home, so items are within easy reach that prevents you from bending down too frequently.
- Prop yourself up on pillows when lounging on chairs and couches at home to avoid slouching.
- Make posture-friendly changes to your wardrobe that won't contribute to back pain or slouching. For example, if you carry heavy items in a shoulder bag or purse, invest in a backpack you can wear on both shoulders to reduce shoulder, neck, and back strain.

Article: written by LVMC, [Health & Wellness, Bone and Joint Health](#), Apr 30, 2021, edited.