

# Good Posture Equals A Happy, Healthy Back

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Does your career and lifestyle affect back health? Absolutely. High heeled shoes and hard, unforgiving standing surfaces or awkward posture at computer workstations cause posture problems and back and neck pain issues.

We have all been told to stand up straight and to stop slouching. Poor posture frequently leads directly to pain. Many Americans are plagued daily with pain that may have been prevented had they corrected their posture. Many of us slouch with our heads arched forward and shoulders rounded, placing great strain on the neck and back. Not only does this type of posture project an undesirable image, it can cause other problems as well.

Neck and back pain is often related to poor posture. If your job requires you to sit all day looking at a computer screen or answering a phone, your head needs to be centered over your shoulders, and your back should be well supported. Armrests on the chair are also helpful. If your job requires you to stand in one position or on an unforgiving surface your feet should be flat on the floor and your work surface should be at a level that doesn't require you to lean over for lengthy periods of time because that may also lead to tremendous strain on the spine and supporting muscles in the hips, knees and ankles.

Standing is one good way to critique your posture. Stand up against a wall and look into a mirror. Your head, shoulders, bottom and feet should press against a wall, with space between the curve of your back and the wall. Your chin should be tucked in and shoulders squeezed back to create a proper musculoskeletal balance and reduce the risks for future pain.

Good posture equals a happy, healthy back. All of these tips are important for a healthy back and healthy lifestyle. Bad posture, a sedentary lifestyle and excess weight can be the back's worst enemies. So, stand or sit up straight and your back will thank you. If you have questions on how to correct your posture or properly fit your workstation for you please contact your local physical therapist.