

Posture, Posture, Posture!

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”Sit up straight”...many of us have heard this before. This simple phrase is related to our posture. Posture is affected by everything we do: sitting, standing, sleeping, working, and it affects every single part of our body.

Our spinal column is made of curves. These curves act as shock absorbers and prevent injury. We have curves in our neck and our upper and lower back. When one of these curves is significantly increased or decreased, thus not functioning efficiently, it is considered poor posture.

One type of poor posture is called kyphosis. This is represented in someone with rounded shoulders, possibly causing chest muscles to shorten and limit shoulder flexibility. Another type of poor posture is called lordosis. This is represented in someone whose stomach is sticking way out. A sideways curve of the spine is termed scoliosis.

So what is considered proper posture? Posture is considered proper when your head is in line with your shoulders, pelvis, hips, knees, and ankles. This proper alignment allows our body to function efficiently.

Here are some simple exercises to help improve your posture:

- ✓ While sitting in a chair, go into a slouched position and then do the reverse where you sit up tall. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ✓ Keeping your eyes looking straight ahead, gently pull/retract chin back. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ✓ Squeeze shoulder blades together. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ✓ Standing, place hands in small of back and bend backwards. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ✓ Hamstring stretch. Prop leg on chair or table. Keep leg straight, bend forward at waist until stretch is felt in back of leg. Repeat with other leg.

If any of these exercises cause any numbness/tingling, increase in back pain or any other significant symptoms, call your doctor.