



Marino TherapyCenters

Since 1977 and Still Your First Choice
Physical Rehabilitation "Centered on You"
Division of The TherapyCenter, Inc.

Community Connection

Our mission is excellence

in the compassionate and efficient delivery of rehabilitative and preventive health care to the people we know, love, and serve.

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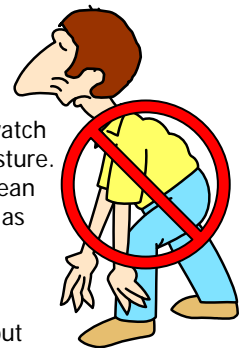
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The 'P' Word: POSTURE!

Poor posture affects more than your appearance . . . it affects your health.

"Stand up straight! Don't slouch!" How many times did you hear those scolding words while growing up? Maybe more than you would like to remember. However, as often as we were told to watch our posture, we were seldom taught effective ways to accomplish good posture. And, contrary to what most of us thought was good posture, it does not mean standing with shoulders thrust back, chin forward, with your spine straight as an arrow. Actually, you're using good standing posture when your ears, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles are "stacked" in a straight line, with shoulders relaxed and knees slightly bent.



True, good posture is a reflection of the way we look and feel about ourselves, but it's much more than that. Good posture is one of the simplest things each of us can do to keep our bodies functioning at top speed, promote movement efficiency, endurance, and contribute to overall well-being.

Good posture is also good prevention. If you have poor posture, your bones are not properly aligned, and your muscles, joints, and ligaments take more strain than nature intended. Faulty posture may cause you fatigue, headaches, muscular strain, and, in later states, pain (not only in the back but the shoulders, hips, knees, jaw, etc). Many individuals with chronic back pain can trace their problems to years of faulty postural habits. In addition, poor posture can affect the position and function of your vital organs, particularly those in the abdominal region. **Bet you hadn't thought of that, had you?**

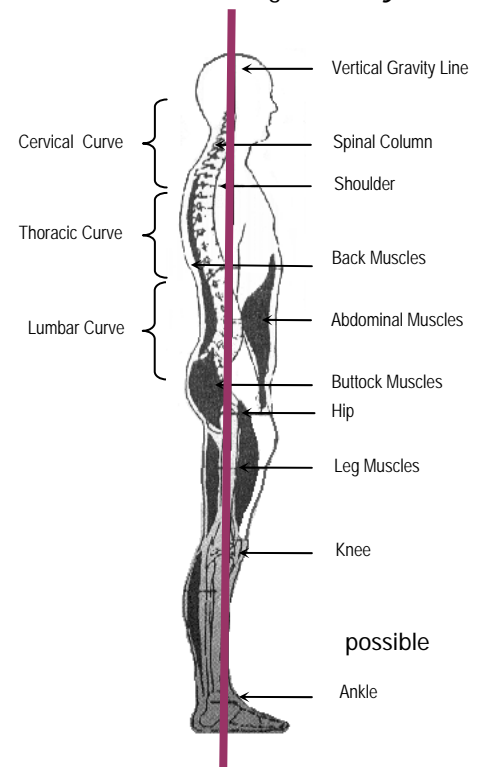
The Anatomy of Good Posture

To know what "good posture" is, it is essential that we understand how your back, muscles, and joints work together to balance your body's position.

Your Back: A healthy back has three natural curves: a slight forward curve in the neck (cervical curve), a slight backward curve of the upper back (thoracic curve) and a slight forward curve in the low back (lumbar curve). Good posture actually means keeping these three curves in balanced alignment.

Your Muscles: Strong and flexible muscles are also essential to good posture. Abdominal, hip, and leg muscles that are weak and inflexible cannot support your back's natural curves.

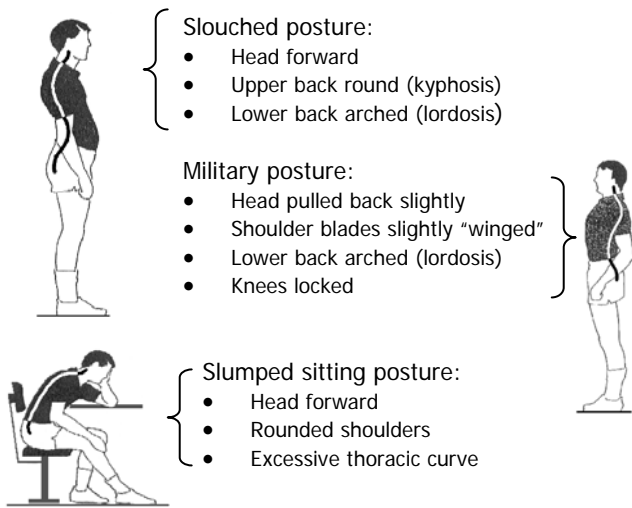
Your Joints: Hip, knee, and ankle joints balance your back's natural curves when you move, making it to maintain good posture in any position.



Poor Posture:

Poor posture distorts the body's proper vertical alignment and the back's natural curves. Chronic poor posture results in posture adaptation and constant muscle and joint stress. It over-strengthens the over-used muscles and weakens the underused muscles. Because the body must balance and because loose joints move before a stiff joint, the chain of the body's motion follows the path of least resistance. This is why, over time, posture worsens and body stress increases. Muscle weakness can lead to not only back problems but arm and leg problems due to overuse to compensate for weak stability.

Good posture only has one appearance, but poor posture comes in many unattractive styles. Three examples of poor posture are:



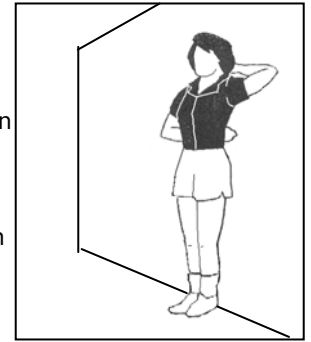
- Slouched posture:**
- Head forward
 - Upper back round (kyphosis)
 - Lower back arched (lordosis)

- Military posture:**
- Head pulled back slightly
 - Shoulder blades slightly "winged"
 - Lower back arched (lordosis)
 - Knees locked

- Slumped sitting posture:**
- Head forward
 - Rounded shoulders
 - Excessive thoracic curve

the wall) and the other hand behind your low back (with the palm against the wall).

- If there is excessive space between your back or neck and the wall, such that you can easily move your hand forward and back more than one inch, some adjustment in your posture may be necessary to restore the normal curves of your spine.



How did you do?

It is possible to correct and maintain your posture throughout your life. Some tips include:

- Throughout each day, concentrate on keeping your three natural back curves in balanced alignment.
- Exercise regularly; exercise promotes strong and flexible muscles that keep you upright in a proper postural position.
- Avoid staying in one position for long periods of time, inactivity causes muscle tension and weakness
- Sleep on a firm mattress and use a pillow under your head just big enough to maintain the normal cervical/neck curve. Use pillows between your knees when lying on your side.
- Keep your weight down; excess weight exerts a constant forward pull on the back muscles and stretches and weakens muscles in the abdomen.
- Wear comfortable and well-supported shoes.
- Walk with good posture, keeping head erect with chin parallel to the ground, allow arms to swing naturally and keep feet pointed in the direction you are going.
- Use good body mechanics when lifting, pulling, pushing, carrying, etc.

Check Your Posture:

The best way to check your posture is to receive a thorough postural evaluation from a physical therapist. Physical therapists have special skills to evaluate and treat postural patterns.

To determine if a professional evaluation may be necessary, you can screen your own posture to some degree. For this you need a wall.

- Stand with your back to a wall, heels about three inches from the wall.
- Place one hand behind your neck (with the back of the hand against

If you already have good posture, **CONGRATULATIONS!** Refer this information to a friend and share the secret of good posture. **If you recognize that your posture could be improved, CONGRATULATIONS! You are on the road to a healthier you.**

To obtain a formal postural screening and activities/exercises that will promote improved postural alignment, contact your physician and your physical therapist.

Community Connection

The best patient care is achieved through effective education on ways to maintain and improve quality of life. This newsletter is designed to enhance our communication with those who entrust their care to Marino TherapyCenters.

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Thank You.



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 Since 1977 and Still Your First Choice
 Physical Rehabilitation "Centered on You"
 Division of The TherapyCenter, Inc.

Therapist Owned & Operated
 29 Years of Service in East Tennessee