

## Posture, Pain and Performance

Few patients seek professional care for bad posture yet these imbalances can cause or contribute to many painful muscle and joint problems. Posture is the body's response to natural forces of gravity and the stresses of daily living, whether standing, sitting, walking, or reclining. With normal erect posture, the body is in a state of balance and harmony, maintained by minimal muscular effort.

Imbalanced posture requires more energy use and muscle contractions which cause a loss of strength and flexibility and hinder performance of even simple daily activities. Pain, bursitis and tendonitis of the hip, shoulder and feet can be caused or complicated by poor standing posture. Shoulder, elbow and wrist pain and tendonitis can be caused or worsened by poor sitting posture. Posture may cause headaches and worn out discs and arthritis in the neck and lower back. Sleeping posture can produce shoulder, hip, wrist, neck and back pain.

Three approaches are used for improving posture. Most important is to recognize and avoid the posture that is causing the problem. If your neck hurts, consider your telephone. Avoid bending your neck toward or cradling the phone between your head and shoulder, and consider buying a headset phone. Secondly, find and correct muscle and joint problems that can be causing the posture. Finally, use exercises and stretches that address specific areas of muscular imbalance.

A simple approach for improving, achieving and maintaining good posture is the "Mirror-image correction." Simply exercise in a direction opposite to the postural problem. If you carry your neck and shoulders forward, exercise the muscles that pull the neck and shoulders back (trapezius and rotator cuff) and those that pull the shoulder blades together (rhomboids). Stretch the muscles that roll your shoulders forward (pectoral muscles) and pull your neck forward.

Mom always told us to sit up straight. Good luck becoming a taller, happier and more energetic you.

Yours in health,

Dr. Rick

*Dr. Rick Schlüssel is a Chiropractor and Applied Kinesiologist providing preventive health care, treatment for pain and injuries, holistic health assessments and a variety of natural therapies. He can be reached at The Healing Place at 530-889-0388 or by email at [rick@mydrnick.com](mailto:rick@mydrnick.com)*