



Posture Perfect

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Do you spend all day sitting in front of a computer? Do you spend hours and hours on your feet? Do you frequently work in awkward positions? Have you neglected to start that exercise program you promised yourself you would? If yes is the answer to any of these questions then you may be heading down the road to poor posture. Some of you have likely reached the destination.

Working professionals who spend long hours in front of a computer or on their feet all day leave themselves vulnerable to a host of back and neck problems. These problems can include headaches, muscle spasms, numbness and general fatigue. Here are a few common identifiers and risk factors that can lead to poor posture:

- Slouching or leaning forward while working at your computer.
- Carrying a heavy bag on one shoulder for extended periods...frequent travelers, new moms, golfers, or students with backpacks.
- Sliding forward in your chair to the point where the low back is no longer supported by the seat back.
- Poor physical condition. Muscle tone helps hold the body in correct postures. Any deficiencies in conditioning translate to poor posture.

In correct sitting posture, your feet should be flat on the floor. Your bottom and hips should be back far enough on your chair seat so that the low back has direct contact with the back of the seat. You should be sitting nice and tall with your shoulders relaxed and your ears in line with your shoulders. Holding your abdominal muscles somewhat firm will assist with keeping the spine nice and tall. If you notice your posture starting to sag it may be time to take a mini break or do few stretches to help reset the proper position.

Correct standing posture includes keeping an even weight distribution on your feet and keeping your spine tall. As far as body alignment, you want to think about keeping your ears over your shoulders, shoulders over hips, hips over knees and knees over ankles. Standing with your knees locked can alter this alignment so it is best to keep a very slight bend at the knee.

Problems with posture can often start in childhood and adolescence, so it is very important to do your parental duty and nag children when necessary. Physical activity is the best way to prevent these problems and is fun for the whole family.