

The Ultimate Guide to Good Posture

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Posture is about far more than looking confident and poised. Sitting or standing in the right position makes sure our bodies function properly. Here we look at posture and how to improve yours starting today.

Is It Really That Bad?

Just what's so terrible about having poor posture, besides not looking as sharp as you could? Quite a bit as it turns out. When you slouch or slump, so does your spine, leading to bad circulation. This can cause vertebrae to deteriorate over time. Chronic fatigue can also result. Coupled with circulation issues, the result can be early exhaustion. Chronic back, neck, and shoulder pain can also result from the strain of bad positioning. Fifty percent of working Americans suffer from back pain, and it's the second most common reason for doctor visits. Twenty five percent of those with back pain suffer from a herniated disc, which may be caused by poor posture.

What Causes Bad Posture?

Bad posture isn't always a sign of laziness. As a nation, weight issues are becoming more common, and weight gain changes how our skeleton and muscles support themselves. We also tend to be less active, which can lead to increased risk of disease. Chairs, hunching at work, unsupportive mattresses, and even low self-esteem contribute to these problems.

Great Posture in Every Position

Greatist

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO GOOD POSTURE



Posture is about far more than *looking confident* and poised. Sitting or standing in the right position makes sure our bodies function properly. Here we will look at posture and how you can **improve yours starting today.**

Is It Really



That Bad?

Just what's so terrible about having poor posture, besides not looking as sharp as you could? *Quite a bit, as it turns out.*



BAD CIRCULATION



When you slouch or slump, so does your spine, which can *affect circulation.*

This can cause *vertebrae to deteriorate* over time.



CHRONIC FATIGUE



Moving your body with poor posture is *taxing* on your muscles and joints. Coupled with the circulation issues poor posture can cause, the result can be *earlier exhaustion* in many cases.



CHRONIC BACK, NECK, & SHOULDER PAIN



A neutral position *relaxes the body.*



A bad position puts *strain* on the body.

➤ Shoulders and neck are also affected, resulting in *headaches* and other pains.

➤ **50%**

of working Americans suffer from *back pain*, and it is the *second most common* reason for doctor visits.



OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES



25% of those with back pain suffer from a *herniated disc*, which may be caused by poor posture.

The wrong posture can cause *misalignment in your* body, which can negatively affect the muscles and bones.



This, in turn, can change the way you move and can even *limit* your range of motion.



What Causes

Bad Posture?

Bad posture *isn't always* a sign of laziness.



As a nation, *weight issues* are becoming more common, and weight gain changes how our skeleton and muscles support themselves.

We also tend to *be less active*, which can lead to increased risk for disease.



Unsupportive shoes



Genetics



Stress



Accidents or injuries



Being overweight



Foot problems



Low self-esteem



Poor lumbar support while seated



Unsupportive mattress



Weak muscles



Chairs that are too high or too low



Hunching to get closer to a screen



The Vicious Cycle



Great Posture in

Every Position

Understanding good posture can help you realign your body the right way.

Here's a quick test to check your posture



1

Stand with the *back of your head* against a wall.

2

Place heels 6 inches from the wall.
Your buttocks and shoulder blades should touch the wall.

There should be **less than 2 inches** between your neck or small of the back and the wall.

A larger gap indicates *bad posture* and a *curving spine*.





SITTING

DO ✓



Keep your head straight and not tilted up or down.



Sit with your knees slightly lower than your hips.



Keep your shoulders back and try to relax.



Keep your feet flat on the floor.



DON'T ✗



Try to keep your back ramrod straight.



Tuck feet under the chair.



Work without support for your arms.



Cross your legs above the knees, as this may cause poor circulation.



STANDING

DO ✓

Keep your shoulders back and aligned.

Use your stomach muscles to keep your body straighter.

Slightly bend your knees to ease pressure on the hips.

Use quality shoes that offer good support.



DON'T ✗



Stick your chest out. Instead, try to keep your chest perpendicular to the ground.



Stand in the same position for long periods of time. Move around and shift your weight.



Wear high heels when standing for long periods of time.

WALKING



Keep your chin parallel to the ground.

Hit the ground with your heel first, and then roll onto the toe.



Keep your stomach and buttocks in line with the rest of the body.

DO ✓



DON'T ✗



Look down at your feet. Instead, look several feet ahead of you.

Arch your back.



RUNNING

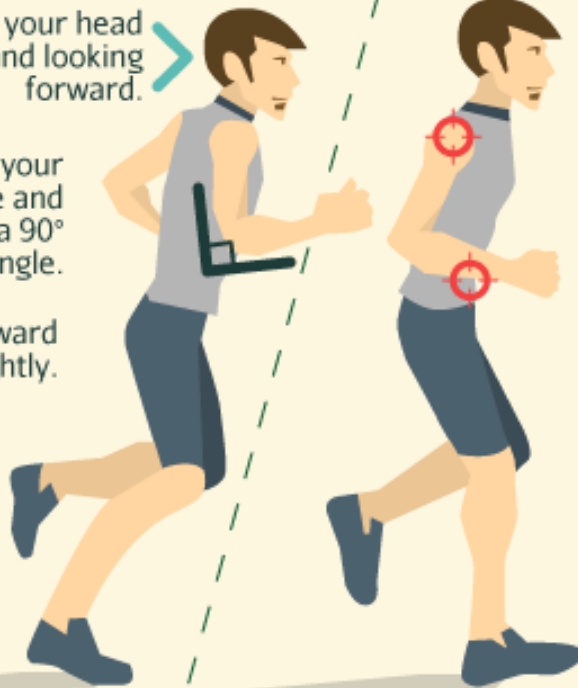
DO ✓

Keep your head up and looking forward.

Keep your arms loose and elbows at a 90° angle.

Lean forward slightly.

Hit the ground with the midpoint of your foot and roll it forward to the toe.



DON'T ✗

Hunch your shoulders.

Bend at the waist.



Lift your knees too high. Go with what feels natural.

SLEEPING

DO ✓

Use a firm mattress that provides support.



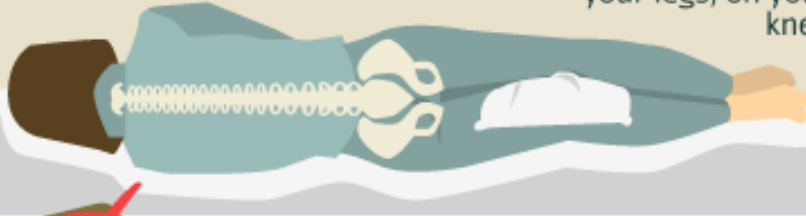
Minimize spinal curves by using pillows as necessary or upgrading your mattress.



Stretch before bed to ease tense muscles.

Sleep on your side with a pillow between

Sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs, on your back, or under your knees for better support.



DON'T



Sleep on your stomach. It can cause pressure on the cervical spine (vertebrae in the neck).



Sleep with a tall stack of pillows that causes your neck to bend unnaturally.

Improve Your Lifestyle to

↑ Improve Your Posture



Did you know that just keeping your weight down can do wonders for improving your posture?

➤ **Exercise** can also **strengthen muscles**, which help hold your body in the correct position.

Practice **sitting** and **walking** properly and note if injuries are causing changes in the way you sit, stand, and move.



It may take some time, but you will be much **happier**

WHEN YOUR BODY FEELS GREAT!

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Here's a quick test to check your posture. Stand with the back of your head against a wall, place heels 6 inches from the wall. Your buttocks and shoulder blades should touch the wall. There should be less than 2 inches between your neck or small of the back and the wall. A larger gap indicates bad posture and a curving spine.

When sitting, keep your head straight and not tilted up or down. Keep your shoulders back and try to relax. Sit with your knees slightly lower than your hips. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Don't try to keep your back ramrod straight, and don't work without support for your arms. Don't tuck your feet under the chair or cross your legs above the knees.

When standing, keep your shoulders back and aligned. Use your stomach muscles to keep your body straight. Slightly bend your knees to ease pressure on the hips, and use quality shoes that offer good support. Don't stick your chest out. Instead, try to keep your chest perpendicular to the ground. Don't stand in the same position for long periods of time, and don't wear high heels when standing for long periods of time.

When walking, keep your chin parallel to the ground and hit the ground with your heel first, then roll onto the toe. Keep your stomach and buttocks in line with the rest of the body. Don't look down at your feet. Don't arch your back.

When running, keep your head up and looking forward. Keep your arms loose and elbows at a 90 degree angle. Lean forward slightly, and hit the ground with the midpoint of your foot and roll it forward to the toe. Don't hunch your shoulders, bend at the waist, or lift your knees too high.

When sleeping, use a firm mattress that provides support. Minimize spinal curves by using pillows as necessary or upgrading your mattress. Stretch before bed to ease tense muscles, and sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs, on your back, or under your knees for better support. Don't sleep on your stomach. It can cause pressure on the cervical spine. Don't sleep with a tall stack of pillows that causes your neck to bend

unnaturally.

Improve Your Lifestyle to Improve Your Posture

Did you know just keeping your weight down can do wonders for improving your posture? Exercise can also strengthen muscles, which help hold your body in the correct position.