

EXERCISES

FOR

BAD POSTURE



**Everything You Need To Improve Posture
In Just A Few Minutes per Day**



Alios Johnson

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INTRODUCTION

Posture may be termed as good or bad and is often relevant to good and bad postural habits. Posture may be defined as the ability to maintain the upright position against the force of gravity so that it prevents one falling over. However, posture is also involved in sitting, lying, stooping, squatting as well as being erect. Habits are learned responses to the environment. The tall teenager, for example may develop rounded shoulders in the attempt to blend in with his/her peers instead of towering above them. It takes time to acquire a habit but once the habit is installed in the subconscious mind, it is difficult to shift.

Good posture suggests a balance and alignment between the muscular and skeletal structures, protecting our bodies from injury and degenerative changes. Muscles, ligaments, tendons, fascia and bony skeleton work together to keep us moving, sitting, standing, and lying down at our request. We have a whole team at our disposal waiting for instructions from above to set us into motion. Our muscular-skeletal system gives us shape, helping to keep the internal organs in place. A well-balanced body is one that feels energetic while a poorly balanced system often feels languid, generally out of sorts and less able to cope with the demands of everyday life. It often has less stamina and can be easily overwhelmed, which has the potential to lead to melt down (burn out). This in turn can affect the hormonal system.

Working arrangements. How we sit or stand and for how long. What type of work do you do? Is it sedentary or heavy, physical work? What is the temperature like? Hot, cold, air-conditioned, draughty conditions can affect the way we react to our environment. Is our work repetitive and maybe we use telephone, computer, carry shopping or schoolbags, laptops etc. Are we fit enough for the job and do we drink enough water during the day? Is our work stressful or does it make us tense and reactive to everyday situations? Constant deadlines, too much caffeine, driving, carrying a heavy handbag on one shoulder are some of the examples that can change us from that lovable, charming individual to a screaming, out of control colleague that is frankly best avoided.

Imagine a line dropped from the middle of your ear down through the middle of your shoulder to the centre of your ankle. Does yours do that? Try checking it in a mirror. Our Victorian ancestors were sticklers for good posture. True for the ladies, at least, it may have something to do with their whalebone corsets, which were often pulled far too tight for any sort of comfort. The Victorians liked to sit ramrod straight often on very hard chairs.

Today's society views matter differently. We tend to be more relaxed about posture and yet someone who carries themselves well often comes across as someone with confidence. If you are going for a job interview, your posture is often far more important than the clothes you are wearing. If you stand or sit upright, clothes look so much better and so too does the impression that you are creating. While looks play an important role, faulty posture has the potential to lead to pain and discomfort, which if ignored for long enough may lead to degenerative changes and disability. Mention the word posture and for many people they simply try to sit up straight but

without a properly balanced underlying structure, it is often very difficult to maintain. The brain has become used to instructing the body to move in a certain manner and it will resist change. Change is frightening and is something that people find hard to embrace. A case of the mind is willing but the flesh is weak.

There are therapies available to help you make the most of your own personal resources. Bowen is one that particularly excels with rebalancing the muscular skeletal structures. It does it in a totally non-threatening way and works with the mind-body relationship as well as the structural entity. It is thought that the mind controls 80% of the body's health with the remaining 20% often emerging as a physical manifestation of, for example, pain. Whilst a single treatment can go a long way in the task of re-educating the working capability of the body, it generally requires a course of treatment to set it on the right track with a maintenance programme of usually a single follow-up treatment at regular intervals. The interval varies from individual to individual.

You may be wondering is it really that simple? Can this be true? The body likes to be in balance. It functions much more efficiently and has more energy. In other words, you feel better. Even if your posture is not the greatest in the world, there are in many cases, great improvements to be made. With more energy, there are more resources to do more and to be more. There are fewer tendencies to injury and to maximize results. Net outcome happiness and fulfilment and for many people this is exactly what they want. Remember with a little help the body has its own resources to correct many postural deficiencies. Why don't you give it a try and find out for yourselves?

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD POSTURE AND AGING

Practically every part of the body deteriorates at some point in time. It is all a part of the aging process that is inevitable for everyone regardless of their stature in life. Carrying or lifting things now becomes a conscious effort, even simple chores like climbing up the stairs or sitting can be daunting.

What Happens To Our Body When We Age?

By the time you reach your 50s or 60s, you will probably notice something peculiar. You might observe half an inch or one-inch difference in your height. This is a natural process brought about by the shrinking of your spine.

Your spine is made up of vertebrae and between them are discs that serve as a cushion. As time goes by, these discs lose their form and begin to thin down. Add to that, your cartilage and connective tissues lose thickness and elasticity. All these things might not be cosmetically noticeable at first. However, this could have been prevented if we exhibit good harmony to our body through proper posture, healthy eating, and regular exercise.

Posture is one thing not everyone takes seriously, but it is very important as it promotes independent lifestyle and movement. Having proper posture improves your balance and symmetry. It can prevent you from having hunched shoulders, back pains, and shrinking spine. In part, it also makes you look good and feel good. All in all, having good posture is a good indicator of how well you will age later on in your life.



What Are The Advantages of Good Posture To Seniors?

There are many health problems brought about by poor posture, and correcting the habit can go a long way. Nonetheless, good posture has to start somewhere. The perfect place is the spine. Few know that our spine carries about 10 pounds of weight everyday. Once you hunch forward, gravity pulls it further causing the spine to tighten. A series of consequences follows after.

For one, this can be the cause of headaches. As you hunch forward when sitting, tension in the cervical vertebrae is built up, causing it to be out of alignment. And over time, misalignment

causes blood vessels to be pinched, limiting their capability to supply blood to the brain, which later promotes migraines and headaches.

Poor posture can lead to back pain. As you slouch, the muscles and ligaments in your back struggle and are pressured to maintain your balance. Pulling the muscles, especially in the lumbar area where most weight is carried, causes back pain. Over time, this habit can cause fast degeneration of the spine, which can lead to serious complications like osteoarthritis, scoliosis, and osteoporosis.

Poor posture also compresses internal organs, decreasing their functionality and efficiency. Studies also show that slouching has a major effect to digestion and blood flow. Because of this, seniors can develop hypertension or low metabolic rate, and put them at risk of heart attack, stroke, and even diabetes and obesity. Add to this, hunching the back makes the rib cage constricted, leaving the lungs as well as the heart limited space to function well. More so, too much pressure put on the spine can press important blood vessels, limiting proper blood flow, which is essential for nourishing and originating these vital organs.

Now that we know how our bad posture habits can cause tremendous health risks to our body, making a conscious effort to change this through posture exercise training can turn the tables. Through proper posture, seniors may no longer experience chest pains, back aches, headaches, and will have better digestion. And if you are still not convinced, further benefits of good posture affect a senior's state of mind. It has been proven that sitting or standing upright can promote positivity, which gives more confidence to our own thoughts and decision making.

In an experiment, having good posture showed that seniors developed better memory recall. Although this is not yet proof that proper posture can slow down the process of Alzheimer's, having the spine properly aligned while standing or sitting makes neurotransmitters communicate faster from the brain to every part of the body, making it easy to retain memory.



Good posture can also eliminate depression. By sitting and walking straight, energy levels are boosted. People with poor posture are prone to panic, anxiety, and shallow breathing, making it hard to overcome negativity. Good posture improves circulation, oxygenating the body well, and boosting perception and thinking, leaving one more at peace and ready to face any problem that may come the senior's way. Getting involved in an elderly exercise program is a good way to start.

Indeed, for seniors to start thinking about their posture early on can help them grace their way through the aging process. And if proper posture is complemented with regular exercise and healthy diet, aging for any senior will just be another phase that they can enjoy more and benefit from.

THE SENSATION OF GOOD POSTURE

The sensation of good posture is very pleasurable. Those with good posture are using the appropriate muscles for movement and stability. These people feel free and easy, at least in their physical movements, and very likely in how they feel about themselves. They walk gracefully and look as though they know that they have that certain "something." They easily engage with others having the same easy sensation. People within this group of posture perfect individuals are exchanging glances, rewarding smiles, and pleasant discussions. These are empowering social exchanges that lift their spirits for their whole day, the whole week, and throughout their lives.



People with good posture showcase how they feel. They have a sense of communication above what is understood by those without good posture. They use their body language to send messages to each other. These messages are actually what may be referred to as "vibes." These vibes or positive feelings transfer almost instantaneously to their electrical/chemical impulses. In fact these feelings are their impulses.

There is no need to be left out of this group of people. We all have electrical/chemical impulses that initiate our emotions and our physical muscle movements as a "reaction." (These impulses are also self triggered, however in this discussion let's review those impulses triggered by others who react toward us.) This meeting on the street for example, actually is an exchange of positive electrical/chemical reactions. If you have the right stuff, then you are appreciated when you are

viewed. When you receive positive communication, say a pleasant "hello," or a kind look, electrical/chemical reactions are felt within you and they are soothing and enjoyable. We'll get to just how you can naturally be part of this selective group of people. Let's discuss more of what this body language is and the associated sensations.

Most of the time our own emotional sensations originate within our soul, our personality. When we improve ourselves physically, then emotionally, we'll have the personality and upright way in our movements to display a sense of peace and kindness toward others. Our own body in turn feels a certain satisfaction derived from their kind response. We can then easily exhibit an even more uplifting body and facial appearance. That's just how it works.

It can work for us or against us. When people see our way of moving or our appearance, are they inspired? Do they like what they see? Do they feel comfortable so they can exchange pleasantries? These are important questions. Let's delve into this.



Think of communication as a two-way street or better, a cloverleaf on ramp to the "smooth highway" of socializing. There are many subtleties that one experiences as we communicate with others. To be rewarded with these pleasant sensations one must appear able to accept them. This is the two way street. Even a neutral but poised appearance on your part will bring about pleasant comments from others. The key for all this to happen often is to have the pleasing body posture and face that causes others to compliment you or at least notice you appreciably. This is the "smooth highway" mentioned earlier. The unspoken language of your body brings about a cause and effect when meeting others. Let's make it a positive and smooth cause and effect. Let's find out how we can do it.

How can you stimulate others to give you rewarding compliments? You can, of course, communicate with them verbally. This is important and useful. However if you have a posture that appears defeated or uninspired when talking, you may have an uphill battle to win the confidence and friendship of others.

What I wish to discuss with you in particular is the unspoken body language of good posture. A good posture is key when socializing. (a posture of grace and poise, not one of ramrod military bearing.) It is key when you make a first impression. It is key when you are viewed from afar. It is useful when you socialize because you are telling someone that you are comfortable, kind to yourself, kind to others. You are telling others that you can be trusted, you are easy to get along with and have what it takes to be associated with anyone. With good posture, you can begin to trust yourself so that you are able to choose good friends. You become more selective. Now you find that it is difficult to be friends with those who do not have similar good tastes as you. Your time and efforts won't be wasted on those who have tastes and traits that you find undesirable.

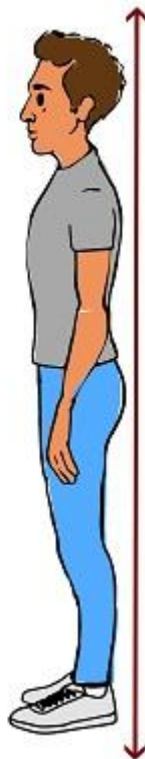
These are the many emotional and mental facets of socializing when you have good posture. I have yet to discuss physically how good it feels just to stand walk or sit properly or how our unburdened muscles "appreciate us" when we walk correctly. Our body's ease of movement rewards us. Our face becomes more relaxed and more prone to smiling. Our muscles become more streamlined, lengthened, and form a smooth base for the skin to layer upon. Our bones, comprised of 25% water, actually lengthen themselves to a small degree, as our lengthening muscles encourages them to do so. Our whole skeleton lengthens as we think "upwardly." Thus our skeletal framework is "open" to accept the continued growth of our muscles and our soft tissue, no matter what age or what physical state we may be in presently. We can change for the better.

Almost all of us have bodies that at birth, arrived with all the bones, nervous system, muscles, etc, to develop into a fine, normal human being. We have a body with all the implements to move about gracefully. We have miss used ourselves, or someone perhaps misguided us up to now, teaching us how to have bad posture. We now perhaps hurry to grab or do something, too quickly we walk with little coordination. This is called "end-gaining" and we focus too much upon reaching the end point of an objective. It is unfortunate that we do not permit ourselves to enjoy the "means-whereby" to get to a certain goal. Realizing this, it is entirely possible to change for the better by switching our focus from end-gaining to concentrating on the means-whereby. To begin a physical change simply lengthen the body. Doing this will help you mentally change for the better.

Lengthen your spine, free your neck and balance you head atop your shoulders will vastly improve your posture and appearance. In fact you owe it to yourself to better your appearance

and posture. You must find a personal path to enjoy yourself and others by acquiring a better posture. You must find a way to move about with grace and poise, and to enjoy the sensations of ease of movement. The sensations and impulses you feel are what F.M Alexander says is our "inherent supremacy." When achieving such a graceful way of moving, one's body tells oneself that, "I am feeling more confident and I have a greater poise. I have more self-control over circumstances in my life. I feel a certain type of supremacy."

Sensations are something that you must feel personally. You must reclaim these personal feelings from those that you gave to others, even when you give them away to appropriate teachers. How can you allow another person to describe the sensations you'll feel? For example, what happens if you are asked by a teacher of the Alexander Technique to "turn you head at the very top of the spine, the C1 vertebra, and not with the neck at the C7 vertebra." Can the teacher describe the subtle sensations you feel? Somewhat but not fully. With due respect to the AT teachers, and I have much respect for those in this field, they may describe the feelings you achieve such as having a lighter walk or being more perceptive. In truth, sensations are difficult to describe. There would be too many words required, too many subjective thoughts to verbalize, so descriptions would be inadequate to state how you really feel. Sensations are difficult to describe. This sensation of lengthening the spine and balancing the head atop the spine must be felt by the person who is doing the changing for the better. You must allow yourself to personally enjoy these powerful uplifting feelings. Acquiring and enjoying such grace, poise and personal power is a yours alone to feel.



One must personally make the effort to change and enjoy these changes as you gain a better posture. One must personally feel the pleasant sensations of a graceful walk or stance. The best way of being "described" the sensation you may feel is not by a person of authority i.e. a teacher or an instructor. No, the best description, or feedback, of how you feel when improving your posture is when you are complimented. This can happen anywhere, anytime, which makes it all the more refreshing. It could be in a social setting, formal or informal, on the street, or in the office. This type of communication cuts through the technical jargon. Your senses note a real achievement of posture improvement when there is a pleasant interaction by your peers, acquaintances or someone new.

Above all, the very best person to describe, or sense, how you feel when you make a change for the better is you. You know when you have a lightened way of movement. You know what posture adjustment you made to become more graceful. You know what poise you've learned, and now exhibit, to make yourself more attractive and robust. Trust yourself. Once gaining a good posture and a certain poise, you are then prepared to like or love yourself more. You are prepared to accept complements. How one feels about themselves when offered kind comments is something to be felt or sensed, not something described to us.

So do all that you can to allow yourself to enjoy these moments when compliments are given to you. Whether these compliments are subtle glances your way, or the opposite sex moving into your personal space, a touch or a soft spoken word, they come in many forms. As simple as being asked over for dinner, or offered a drink of water can be considered a compliment. Doing all that you can to do to accept compliments includes improving posture, gaining grace and poise. When you improve your posture, compliments come in greater numbers. As your posture improves, so does your self-assurance, and so does your life.

Remember to passively exercise. By that I mean lengthen the spine, free the neck and align it with the more vertical spine. Balance the head a top the neck and above the lifted shoulders. Allow the sternocleidomastoid muscles (the front pair of neck muscles) to pull up the clavicles and sternum so the shoulders and chest rise. Loosen the jaw and breathe through the nose. Do this subtly. Do it for a better you. You will be appreciably regarded.

BAD POSTURE

We've been told time and time again to "sit up straight" or "stop slouching", but have we ever considered the health benefits of having good posture? In fact, people often attempt to fix their posture merely because it makes them look more confident, slimmer, and attractive. While all this may be true, bad posture can create many health issues that should be reason enough to work towards better posture. For example, bad posture is linked to chronic back pain, migraines, poor digestion, lack of oxygen flow, and much more.

Poor posture or "postural dysfunction" is defined as when our spine is being held in an unnatural position. The result of these unnatural positions are extra stress on our joints, muscles, and vertebrae. Most often, poor posture is something that we naturally do without even noticing. Anyone can suffer from poor posture and if you begin poor posture at a young age, is it likely you will carry it throughout your life. People are becoming more and more susceptible to posture issues because of the use of technology, forcing us to hold ourselves in unique positions to view a small screen. Unless you are actively working towards good posture, you are most likely making some type of posture mistake without even realizing it.

What are the Negative Effects of Poor Posture?

Poor posture has the potential to create numerous health issues including:

Low energy levels - The shallow breathing created by bad posture causes our energy levels to lower greatly.



Chronic neck and back pain - Sitting or standing in slouched positions for any extended period of time puts extreme stress on your back and neck. At first this pain may just be short and acute. However, over time poor posture can do as much as completely misalign your spine.



Lack of oxygen flow throughout the body - The lungs function correctly when the diaphragm and rib cage properly expand. In essence, having poor posture restricts blood and oxygen flow because the expansion isn't happening correctly.

Heart problems - The muscle strain and poor posture of the spine and rib cage negatively impact your heart health. This is mostly because of the lack of blood flow that occurs when you hunch over for extended periods of time. Also, any type of misalignment of your spine has the trickle down effect on other parts of your body.

Migraines and tension headaches - migraines and tension headaches are most commonly seen in people who spend all day working at a desk. The strain placed on the body from holding oneself incorrectly makes a person vulnerable to migraines and tension headaches. The lack of blood and oxygen flow to the head is also a component of this type of pain.

Lack of confidence - Many studies have shown a connection between someone who slouches and a lack of confidence. Often times these studies take it a step further saying that people who slouch are more likely to suffer from depression, stating people who slouch when they walk tend to experience increased feelings of depression and decrease levels of energy.

Digestion issues - Sitting for most of the day starts to constrict your intestines. The constriction of your intestines can make digestion a big problem. Poor posture has been attributed to issues like acid reflux and hernias.

Poor posture can come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Everyone has their own way of incorrectly holding their posture. However, some posture issues are more common than others.

Problem: Slouching in a Chair

Many people have become accustomed to the chair slouch because sitting straight doesn't feel natural or comfortable. The natural tendency of a person sitting down for extended periods of time is to slouch over or down in the chair. This type of slouching is especially common with kids, teens, and people who work sedentary jobs. Over time, the chair slouch places extreme amounts of strain on muscles and soft tissues. In return, this position is known to create lots of back, shoulder, and leg pain. It may seem like the natural and comfortable stance at first, but gradually being a chair sloucher will backfire on your health.

Solution: Proper Sitting Posture

To have good chair adequate you want to work at keeping all of your body parts aligned with the others. Always sit as far back as possible with your chair as close to the desk as possible (if you're sitting at one). Your feet should be flat on the ground, not crossed or shifted in any specific direction.

7 SIGNS YOU'LL NOTICE WHEN YOU HAVE BAD POSTURE

You may only have some of them, you may even have all of them, but the signs of bad posture you have are clear for everyone to see...including you. If you know what to look for! These are

the 7 most common signs of bad posture that you're likely to see in yourself, your friends or family so keep your eye out!

1. Forward head carriage

How far forward does your head poke? Forward head carriage is usually the most common sign of bad posture. With good posture you want to see the hole in your ear sit over the middle of your shoulder. The further forward your head goes the more pressure it puts on the muscles and joints through your neck which lead to structural changes in your body that cause pain.

2. Slumped Shoulders

Slumped or rolled shoulders are another obvious sign of poor posture. Slumped shoulders often occur due to extended periods of sitting especially when leaning forward and staring at a computer screen.

Besides the obvious sign of your shoulders not sitting backwards another thing to look for is how much your chest sticks out. The further forward your shoulders come the more it depresses your chest. This causes tightening of the muscles in your chest as well as your neck and weakness in the muscles that are meant to hold your shoulders back.

3. Hunch Back

Hunch back can sound a little extreme. Generally what you want to look for is an increase in the curve through your mid-back, usually between your shoulder blades. This is known as an increased kyphosis. If you're noticing an increase in this curve your more than likely going to see both forward head carriage and slumped shoulders as well since they usually come about before the curve in your mid back increases.

4. Anterior Pelvic Tilt (Duck Bottom)

With bad posture your pelvis can change in one of two ways. Anterior pelvic tilt refers to your pelvis tilting into a forward position.

This tilt increases the curve through your lower back leading to more stress being put on certain joints there. On top of this it will lead to tight muscles at the top of your thigh (hip flexors) and very tight muscles in the back of your thigh (hamstrings). You may also notice it causes your stomach and bottom to stick out more than they should.

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