



Straighten Up! *May is Posture Month*

Since the month of May is Posture Month, celebrate by resolving to improve your posture – you'll feel better and look better.

Posture: Your Body's Balancer

If you don't balance, you fall down! Our bodies would fall forward without muscles pulling us back. We use our muscles reflexively to balance when we sit, stand, sleep, or work.

When you have an injury, your body will move differently to avoid pain. Over time, the body will adapt. Even if there is no continued pain, unbalanced patterns of motion persist. The human body still **MUST** balance to stand. So, the brain adapts and adopts new muscle and joint positions.

We believe we are standing straight because our brain is being told by our senses that we are balanced, even though the mirror shows we are not.

The Human Body: Designed To Move

It is much easier to walk for 30 minutes than to stand perfectly still for 30 minutes. When we walk (or run) we must balance our bodies. In order to balance we switch back and forth between **standing** and **shifting** muscles.

During walking, we use **STANDING** muscles to stand on one foot, and then **SHIFTING** muscles to shift to the other foot. Standing or sitting still primarily works the standing muscles, causing these muscles to fatigue with time. However, when we walk we alternate between using standing and shifting muscles. This allows each set of muscles a moment of rest, reducing fatigue.

Your Body Learns What You Teach It

The body moves in patterns of motion which adapt to each individual's body type, history of injuries, and daily habits. The body's motion patterns are like a folded piece of paper that continues to fold at a crease because the fibers have been bent in a pattern. Strong muscles lift more. Weak ligaments stretch more. The body posture adapts, creating a postural change, or distortion. Distortions are seen when looking at posture (how people stand) and gait (how people walk). Over time, adaptive patterns of body motion cause increased body stress and

breakdown. Here are some examples:

- If you sleep on your stomach with your head turned to the right, when standing you will find you head does not turn as easily to the left.
- When you prop a phone under your neck while talking on the phone your neck twists to that side.
- When driving or sitting in front of a computer, day after day, the body folds forward in a slump.

Our good and bad habits shape our bodies, our posture, and our patterns of motion. We adapt to doing whatever we do repeatedly.

Re-Educate Your Posture

Here are a few simple exercises* to help you achieve and maintain good posture:

Exercise #1: Stand up against a wall and face straight ahead. Gently pull your head back towards the wall. Keeping your face level, without looking up or down, jut your neck forward. Then

(continued on reverse side)



(continued from other side)

bring it straight back as if were on railroad tracks. You should feel like a turtle pulling his head back into his shell. Repeat five times.

Exercise #2: Lie on your stomach in a "push-up" position. Slowly, with controlled motion, "press up" your body. Keep your pelvis on the floor. Do not strain the low back and only come up as high as you feel comfortable. Slowly lower back down to your stomach, and then repeat.

Exercise #3: Posture Ball** Stretch. Postureballs are big inflatable balls used by chiropractors and other health care providers to teach strength and balance. Have someone spot you the first time you sit on a postureball until you feel comfortable and balanced. Sitting on the ball, slowly walk forward and roll down on the ball until your head touches the ball. Then walk backwards so your spine curves and lengthens over the ball. When you feel comfortable, try and reach your arms overhead. It is important to move slowly and with control. Relax and stretch for 5 slow breaths.

Exercise #4: Posture Ball** HUG. Kneel in front of the posture ball. Slowly, with controlled motion, roll forward on the ball, letting the ball support your entire weight. Keep your hands on the floor for balance only. Gently roll forward on the ball until you are on your toes, and then slowly roll back until your knees are on the floor again. Repeat several times. Do not strain the low back and only come as far forward as you feel comfortable. Remember to take slow deep breaths as you stretch and relax.

Stand Tall with Chiropractic Care

Your doctor of chiropractic is a trained posture specialist. Ask your doctor of chiropractic for more information on how to improve your posture. Regular chiropractic care, along with regular exercise, good nutrition, and a wellness outlook can help you become and remain a happy, healthy human being!

This article was provided courtesy of Steven Weiniger, DC, the founder of Bodyzone.com, an on-line health information resource and national referral directory.

© 2005 BodyZone, LLC, All Rights Reserved.
Visit www.bodyzone.com for more information
or call (866) 443-8966.

**Always consult your doctor before participating in any exercise program. All posture exercises should be performed without pain. If you experience pain or discomfort, stop the exercise and consult your doctor.*

***Choosing the proper ball for your body type is important. For tips on choosing the size that's right for you and for more exercises consult your doctor of chiropractic. ■*

Take the Human Trivia Quiz



Where is the funny bone located?

- A. Near the stomach
- B. Under the arm pits
- C. Behind the neck
- D. On the medial side of the elbow

What did Hippocrates (460-377 BC), father of modern medicine, say about health?

- A. "Drugs. More drugs. Then surgery."
- B. "In the future, an exercise device you place between your legs called the 'Thigh Master' will revolutionize the health and fitness industry!"
- C. "Health plans should have more chiropractic coverage!!"
- D. "Look well to the spine for the cause and cure of disease."

Who is the founder/discoverer of Chiropractic?

- A. Dr. Snappenpopp
- B. Dr. Feelgood
- C. D.D. Giftedhands
- D. D.D. Palmer

How many bones and muscles are in the human body?

- A. Unsolved mystery
- B. 2.6 bones and 6.0 muscles
- C. 26 bones and 60 muscles
- D. 206 bones and 600+ muscles

How does laughter affect the human body?

- A. Psychologically, laughing at others will boost self-esteem.
- B. It is a better exercise for your stomach than sit-ups and crunches.
- C. Triggers the brain's "stupid joke-telling" reflex.
- D. Reduces depression, heart disease and pain, and also helps boost the immune system and sense of well-being.

KEEP LAUGHING - STAY HEALTHY!!!

[Key: All answers are "D"]

Thank you to Dan Rodriguez, DC ■ www.hawaiianharddrive.com