

Back Health

How is your posture right now? Posture is more than just a straight back. A good posture can improve your back health by reducing strain to your muscles and stress to your spine. Many occupations place stress on your back such as construction, office, nursing, and factory jobs. A large external force, repetition/overuse of a muscle, and inactivity, places your back in a vulnerable position. Be sure to do back, hip, and shoulder exercises and stretches to strengthen your back.



What is Good Posture?

When you are standing, you should be able to draw a straight line from your earlobe, through the shoulder, hip, knee, and into the middle of the ankle.

How Do I Check My Posture?

- Heels against the wall
- Buttocks against the wall
- Upper back against the wall with back of shoulders touching
- Arms falling laterally (not protracted at the shoulder)
- Crest of skull against the wall
- Abdominal wall contracted (core should be engaged)

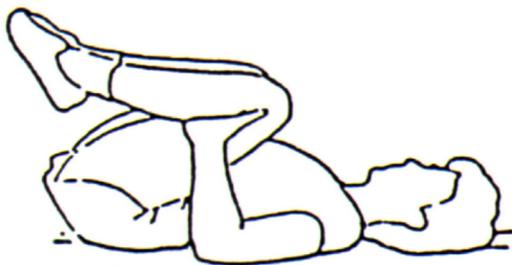
Better Posture Helps with:

- Improving circulation and digestion
- Improving nerve conduction
- Improving quality of respiration
- Increasing your energy
- Decreasing your risk of injury
- Decreasing your risk of depression



Exercising helps to provide a strong support for your spine. Stretching helps to increase your flexibility.

Back



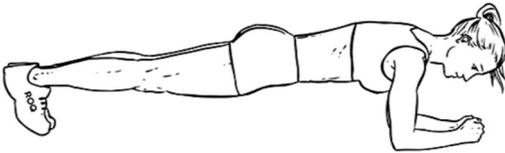
Lie on your back and bring your knees to your chest.
Gently roll from side to side.



Lie on your stomach with your legs together and straight, arms straight, and extended above your head. Keep your head/neck in neutral position. Keeping limbs straight (but not locked), simultaneously lift your arms and legs toward ceiling to form a gentle curve within your body. Hold for a slow 30 counts. Do not hold your breath.



Place your hands directly under your shoulder with your knees directly under your hips. Simultaneously extend your left arm and right leg while maintaining a flat back and facing downward. Hold for 3 seconds, and repeat with opposite arm and leg. Alternate back and forth for 10-15 repetitions.

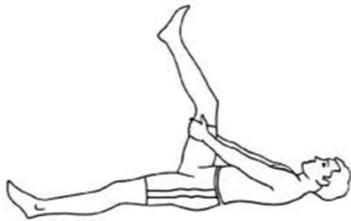


Position yourself onto your hands and knees. Plant your forearms on the floor and lift up your legs until your body is a straight line – keep your abdominals tight. Try and hold this position for 30 seconds.

Hip



Position yourself in a forward lunge with your left leg bent at 90 degrees and your right knee on the ground. Contract your abs and your glutes as you slightly tilt your pelvis. To increase the stretch, reach your right arm up and lean away from the side you are stretching. Hold for up to 2 minutes. Repeat on other side.



Lie on your back on the floor and bend one leg while placing your hand behind the knee. Slowly raise the knee perpendicular to the ground. Extend lower part of leg you are stretching until you feel a stretch on your hamstrings. Hold stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times, then switch leg.

Shoulder

Protraction

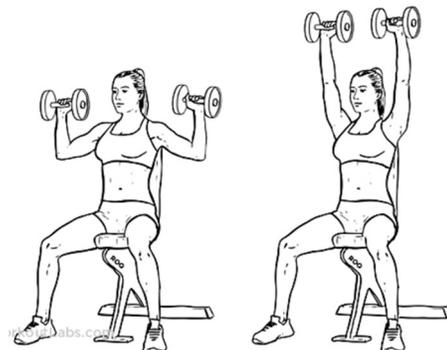


Retraction



Protraction – internally rotate your shoulders to take your scapula away from your spine and return to neutral position. Repeat 10 times.

Retraction – externally rotate your shoulders to take your scapula closer to your spine and return to neutral position. Repeat 10 times.



Position dumbbells to each side of shoulders with elbows below wrists. Press dumbbells upward until arms are extended overhead. Lower to sides of shoulders and repeat 15 times.