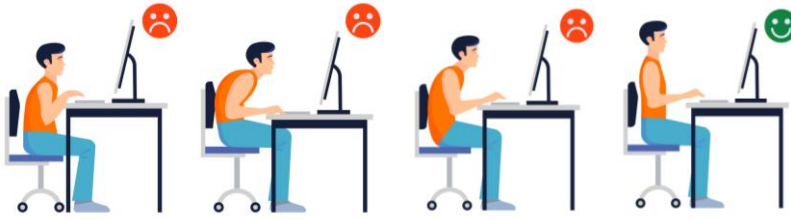


HEALTHY HABITS

BUILD A BETTER POSTURE

Over time, bad habits like slouching, leaning forward into our computer screens, and tilting our heads when we talk on phones lead to poor posture. Poor posture is related to chronic backaches, headaches, and shoulder and chest pain. It takes time to correct your posture, and we have simple exercises to gradually make improvements. We also have tips you can follow when you're working!

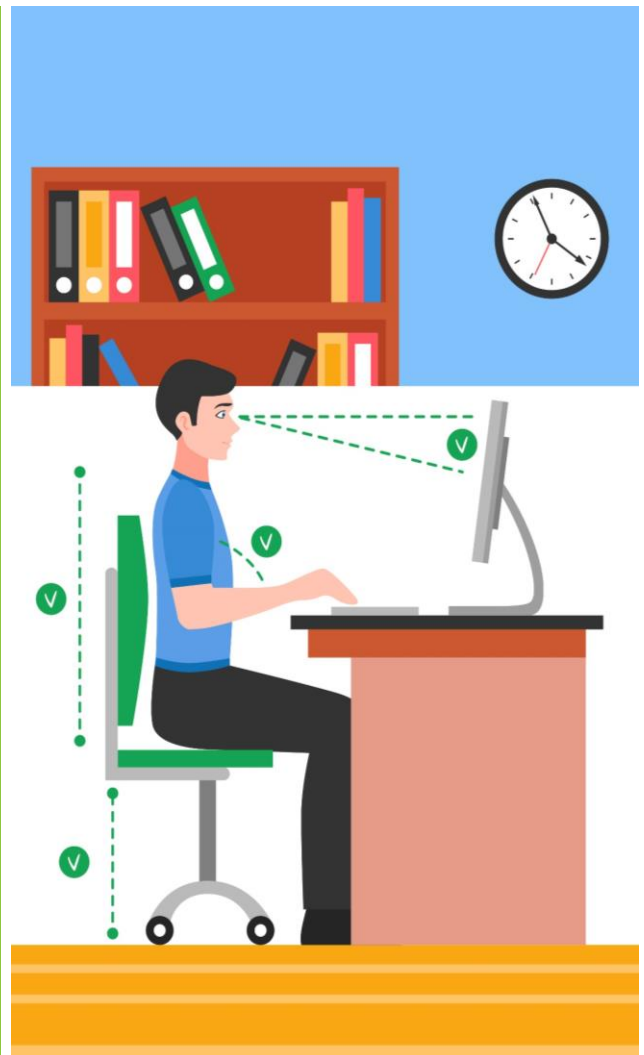
Why Build a Better Posture?



- ✓ Improves circulation
- ✓ Improves nerve condition
- ✓ Improves quality of respiration
- ✓ Promotes proper breathing
- ✓ Increases energy levels
- ✓ Decreases risk of depression
- ✓ Prevents injury

10 Ways to Improve Your Posture

1. Ears, shoulders, and hips should be in a straight line. You may be leaning too far forward or backward.
2. Uncross your legs and place both feet flat on the ground.
3. Open up your chest by bringing your shoulder blades together.
4. When you sit, use a support pillow, or a rolled-up towel for your lower back.
5. Keep moving! Every hour, take a brief walk around to increase blood flow.
6. Consider a standing desk, or use a swiss ball to activate your back muscles instead of a chair.
7. Ensure your computer screen is placed at the proper distance from your eyes to prevent you from leaning forward.
8. Stand on your entire foot. Most people put more weight on their heels.
9. When lifting or picking things up, do not bend forward. Squat down and bend your knees. Do not lift heavy items over your shoulders.



HEALTHY HABITS

BUILD A BETTER POSTURE

Exercises to Build a Better Posture

Core Exercises

Crunch

Lie on the floor with your knees bent. Place your hands gently behind your head. Without pulling on your neck, keep your elbows wide as you lift your upper torso. Repeat 12 to 15 times.



Plank

Position yourself onto your hands and knees. Plant your forearms on the floor and lift your legs until your body is a straight line. Keep your abdominals tight. Hold the position for 30 seconds or longer.



Side Plank

Lie on your right side with one leg stacked on the other (or slightly in front). Bend your right arm at 90 degrees to lift your body. hold the position for 30 seconds or longer.



Bicycle Crunches

Lie on your back with knees bent. Intertwine your fingers and place them behind your head. As your right elbow reaches your left knee, extend your right knee. Your shoulder blade should lift off the ground as you twist your torso. Return to the starting position and switch sides. Repeat 12 to 15 times on each side.



Dead Bug

Lie on your back with arms reaching towards the sky and your knees bent at 90 degrees. As you extend your right arm over your head, extend your left leg. Return to the starting position and switch sides. Repeat 12 to 15 times per side.



HEALTHY HABITS

BUILD A BETTER POSTURE

Back Exercises

Wall Slide

Stand about 1 foot away from a wall with the back of the head, upper back, and butt touching the wall. Bring your arms to a 90-degree angle with the back of your hands against the wall. Engage abs and tilt the pelvis, so there is no space between the wall and your back. Slowly slide your arms up along the wall in a Y-shape. Repeat 12 to 15 times.



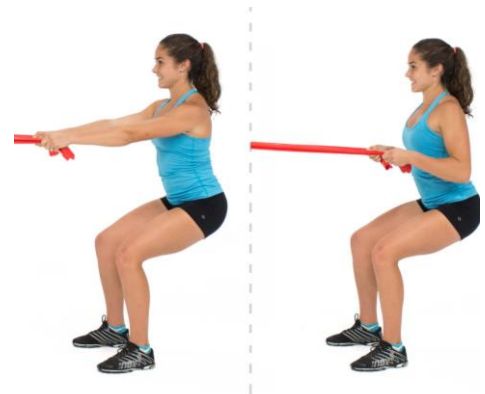
Back Extensions

Lay on a ball with abdominals and hips. Keep your toes firm on the ground. Place your hands by your ears or across your chest and then raise your torso level with your body. Hold this position for 1-3 seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat 12 to 15 times.



Back Rows

Anchor the centre of the resistant band onto a vertical pole at elbow height. Bend your elbows to pull the band toward your body in a rowing motion. Squeeze your shoulder blades together. If an anchor is not available, sit on the floor with your legs extended and place the center of a resistant band behind the soles of your feet. Sit as straight as possible and bend your elbows to pull the band toward your body. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 12 to 15 times.



Bird Dog

Position yourself on your hands and knees. Reach your left arm forward and extend your right leg back simultaneously. Keep your pelvis level and abs engaged. Return to the starting position and switch sides. Repeat 10 to 12 times.



HEALTHY HABITS

BUILD A BETTER POSTURE

Reverse Dumbbell Fly

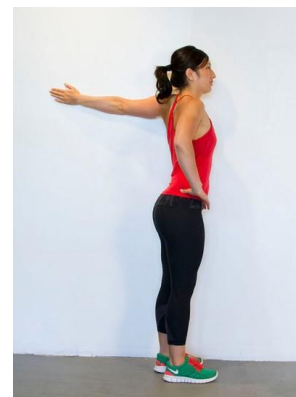
Sit on a ball with your feet planted on the ground. Lean forward so your chest is over your knees. With dumbbells in each hand, keep your arms straight and raise them to shoulder-height. Do not lock your elbows. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 10 to 12 times.



Chest and Hip Flexor Exercises

Wall Stretch

Extend your arm along the wall and place your palm flat on the wall. Slowly turn your chest away from the wall until you feel a stretch in your chest.



Hip Flexor Stretch

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 the position for 30-60 seconds. Repeat on the other side.



Practice Good Posture!

Reset your posture several times throughout the day. Start by standing up. Clasp your hands together and slowly reach for the sky. Align your body, stand tall, and feel your abs engaged. Reach as high as you can and inhale deeply for 20 to 30 seconds. Bring your arms down slowly and release your breath. Your posture has been set!

Source: Desta, Y. (2014). 7 Simple ways to improve your posture at work. www.mashable.com/2014/05/27/posture-office-tips/

Kent, G. (2011). Exercises to improve your posture. www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness_articles.asp