

GOOD POSTURE IS IMPORTANT MENTALLY AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY

Resolve to 鉄 it Up Straightin 2013

by Dr. Jacob Hertz, St. Charles Pain & Wellness Center

How many times did our parents tell us when we were children, "sit up straight"? Besides trying to keep us from looking like a boiled noodle, good posture is also important for a variety of health reasons, according to Dr. Jacob Hertz of St. Charles Pain & Wellness Center.

It helps us to breathe properly, increases concentration, reduces the risk of neck and back pain and increases our sense of well-being. Yet most people practice bad posture. And in the computer age, it's not surprising, given how many hours we spend sitting at a desk. Bad ergonomics, as well as the number of hours spent sitting without getting up and moving around, has led to an epidemic of bad posture – and subsequently many cases of back and neck pain.

"I have had many patients seek care at our office due to posture related pain, notes Dr. Hertz. 徹 ne who comes to mind is an elderly gentleman who had moderate neck, upper, and lower back pain with an obvious forward lean to his posture and gait when he walked into the office. He was not even aware that his posture had deteriorated to that extent.

"His particular symptoms arose from years of sitting with bad posture. After the initial phase of chiropractic treatment he had been telling me that almost everyone he came into contact with was noticing and commenting on the fact that he was walking straighter and that he actually looked taller! He was very happy and of course as we were correcting his posture his body started to heal and his symptomatology improved."

Getting adjusted by a chiropractor can improve posture and its related pain or discomfort. Chiropractors are experts at analyzing posture and spinal problems. By analyzing posture, they look for changes in the alignment of the knees, the leveling of the hips or pelvis, the height differences across the shoulders and tilting of the head and neck, forward tilting of the pelvis, forward head translation, and an increase or decrease in the spinal curvatures.

According to Dr. Roger Sperry, who received a Nobel Prize for brain research, "The more mechanically distorted a person is, the less energy is available for thinking, metabolism and healing."

Proper posture opens the airways and expands the rib cage, allowing us to breathe more deeply. Our lung capacity is reduced by as much as 30% when we slouch. A brain receiving its full measure of oxygen is more powerful and has a better ability to concentrate. Your muscles and organs will also benefit from added oxygen, giving you more energy.

Poor posture also makes you tire more easily. 徹 ur skeletal system was designed to perform optimally when

we are in the correct posture, notes Dr. Hertz. Our spines takes the majority of weight-bearing stress when we're moving and sitting. But, bad posture moves the weight to areas of the skeleton that were not designed to take a great amount of force. This makes our muscles, tendons and ligaments work harder to keep us upright and puts excessive stress on less sturdy parts of our bones and joints. Over time, he adds, bad posture causes changes to the spine that can become permanent constricting nerves and blood vessels and leading to chronic pain."

Mentally, studies have indicated that people experiencing depression felt markedly better when their posture improved. Good posture also increases self-confidence. A study by researchers at Ohio State University instructed subjects to sit up straight or to slouch. Of those who sat up straight, their confident, upright posture gave them more confidence in their own thoughts, whether positive or negative.

What does proper posture look like? You should be able to draw a straight line down from the earlobe through the shoulder, hip, knee and mid-ankle, explains Dr. Hertz, and your chin parallel with the floor. Most people's heads jut forward due to crouching over laptops and hand-held devices like mobile phones and tablets. Even when the head juts just an inch forward from the spine, it essentially doubles the amount of head weight the musculoskeletal system must absorb.

To help maintain your posture throughout the day and every day this year:

1. Choose an office chair that is ergonomically designed, with extra support for the lower back.
2. Get up and move around regularly throughout the day.
3. Strengthen your core muscles -- yoga and pilates are good forms of exercise for overall stretching and strengthening and will enable you to maintain good posture.

Distortions in spinal alignment are indications of vertebral subluxation – a condition treated only by chiropractors. The vertebral subluxation is a misalignment that affects the spinal joints and discs causing changes in muscle function and irritating the spinal nerves. Subluxation affects the function of the nerve and any area of the body supplied by that nerve. Multiple subluxations can affect multiple organs, glands and system of the body leading to ill health. By correcting these misalignments, many people live healthy, well, and with great posture!