

## The Importance of Posture

It is time to take a new look at the prevention of neck and back injuries. In order to maintain a healthy back and neck, strong flexible muscles are a must to support the spine's natural curves. In order for your back to be healthy, the spine's curves must be in balanced or neutral alignment at all times in both stationary activities and with movement.

Many conditions such as sciatica, disc trouble, low back pain, whiplash, neck pain, pinched nerves, arthritis and rounded shoulders have one thing in common: each condition can feel better or worse by the way you align and balance your head, neck and back as you go about your daily activities.

Poor postural habits such as sitting slumped or an increased low back arch takes the body out of good alignment. Your skeleton should be used so that the joints are allowed to move freely. When the body is out of alignment, some muscles are over worked while others do not work enough. Ideally, all your muscles should work together in an efficient, balanced way.

Postural habits that align the spine in a neutral position enable the muscles to be used in a balanced way. Good postural habits also increase the body's ability to heal the above conditions and are effective in preventing a reoccurrence of problems. Regardless of age, learning to move in a way that is beneficial to your back is both necessary and effective.

Do your own posture check and try the following tips to improve your posture to prevent neck and back problems in your future.

### GOOD POSTURE

- Is your head held straight?
- Are your shoulders level?
- Are your hips level?
- Is your chin parallel to the floor?
- Are your shoulders in line with your ears?

### TIPS FOR IMPROVING POSTURE

- Support your arms and keep you shoulders level while sitting.
- Change position when doing an activity for a prolonged period of time.
- Don't just wear your stomach muscles-pull time in.
- Keep your car seat upright so that your hips are at a 90% angle.
- Think "tall" when standing.
- Stand with your weight on both feet.
- Sit in a chair with a straight back with you're back supported and feet flat on the floor.
- Wear comfortable shoes. Avoid high heels.
- Keep your weight down and exercise regularly.
- Sleep on a firm mattress with a pillow that comfortably supports your neck.

## Posture Check

In a Mirror, check your posture from the front and side.

