

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is sitting in a black office chair at a wooden desk. He is leaning forward slightly, and his hands are resting on his lower back, suggesting discomfort or pain. On the desk in front of him is a silver laptop, a grey notebook, a glass of water, a pen, and a small potted plant. A dark grey blazer is draped over the back of his chair. In the top right corner, there is a coffee cup and a small black object.

back2
balance

OUR TIPS ON

Posture

www.back2balance.co.uk

You may have heard the word posture a lot and wondered what actually is good posture? Everyone's posture is different and can depend on lots of different things like your job, it may even change from day to day depending on how you feel, happy/sad.

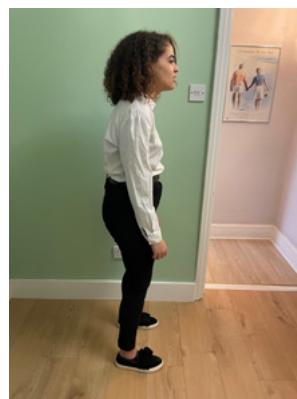
To start with, it's important to understand that everyone's spine should have natural curves. If you were looking at someone's spine from side on, you should see an inwards curve in the neck (cervical lordosis), an outwards curve in the mid back (thoracic kyphosis), and an inwards curve in the lower back (lumbar lordosis). Due to everyone being made so differently, you will see a variation of these curves from person to person. However, if someone has an increased outward curve in their mid spine (thoracic kyphosis) for example, this can lead to poor posture and put pressure on different areas of their spine and their muscles. This may be from a desk based job meaning they spend lots of time hunched over their computer. This will not necessarily lead to any problems, but it can be a contributing factor. It may lead to people feeling conscious about the appearance of their posture.



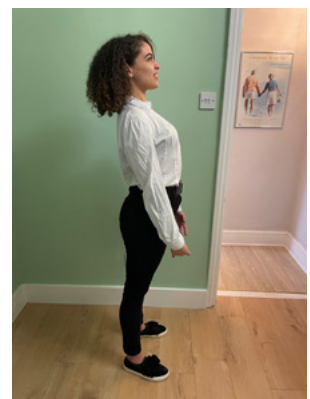
Normal posture



Normal posture



Slumped and anterior head carriage



Hyper extended 'dancer' posture

So why is good posture important? Firstly, it makes sure that stress and tension is distributed evenly through your bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments. If you have poor posture, it can



be like a daily repetitive strain injury as tension is constantly being put through the same structures. Good posture enables your body to move as freely as possible. In this day and age, we have a problem with excessive sitting, being still, sitting and not exercising enough is linked with problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, back pain and depression. Movement is one of the most important things for your body, and we must make sure we do

this enough. Your best posture is your next posture! Regardless of whether you're sitting or standing in the best posture ever, if you're sat there for hours on end it's going to cause just as many problems as if you were sitting in the worst posture ever. So people, get moving!! Take regular breaks from sitting (every 30 mins get up and move even if it's only for 30 seconds), try and get your 10,000 steps in a day and try to do at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week. Or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise a week.

So, although we know that our best posture is our next posture, here are some things to look out for...

Set up a timer or ask someone to take some pictures of you from side on, from the back and from the front.

- From side on, look at your ear. Is it in front of the midpoint of your shoulder? If it is then you may have a forward head carriage meaning your head is too far forward.
- If from the side on photo, you can see your shoulder blade, your mid back may be too rounded and you may have an increased thoracic kyphosis.
- If from the side, the front of your belt line is lower than the back, your lower spine may be too arched (an increased lumbar lordosis) this may also be leading to a forward tilt of your pelvis.



- If you look at your shoulders in the photo taken from the back, ideally they should be level and one shouldn't appear higher than the other.
- When looking at the photo from the front, your kneecaps should point forward not inward. If they point inwards then it may be causing your knees to touch when your legs are straightened.

After doing this, can you complete the posture tension test? Stand up against a wall and try to touch your heels, buttock, shoulder blades and head against the wall. Then bring your arms up to 90 degrees and try to touch your elbows against the wall, then bend your elbows to 90 degrees and try to touch your hands and wrists against the wall... is everything able to touch?

So what can we do about poor posture?

Well firstly, it's important to implement the tips stated above,

- Taking regular breaks if you have a desk based job (every 30 mins), if you have a manual job spending 5 minutes a day to do some simple spinal stretches and mobility exercises, the same if you have a repetitive job i.e. hair dressing, follow the link to [an easy to follow video of some stretches](#)
- Try to get 10,000 steps in a day
- Try to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise a week.

When trying to improve posture, it's to just say, stand up straight! However, if we don't firstly loosen off the joints in your spine that have gotten tight due to poor posture, and strengthen the muscles needed to support good posture then it's quite unrealistic to just be able to stand up straight.

Firstly, you may want to consider getting your spine and posture checked by a professional such as an osteopath or chiropractor. They can then advise you on the best ways to improve your posture.

You can also give the exercises linked below a go to strengthen the muscles used for good posture.

- [YTWL posture rehab exercise](#)
- [Funky chickens exercise to correct forward head carriage](#)
- [Bent over rows](#)
- [Abdominal bracing](#)