

# “Protect Your Posture!”

## *Handbook*

- What is Posture?
- Stretches for the Home and Office
- How to Sit, Stand and Lie Down
- Proper Sleeping Positions
- Postural Exercises
- Proper Texting Postures
- Proper Posture at your desk

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## What is posture?

Posture is the position in which we hold our bodies while standing, sitting, or lying down. Good posture is the correct alignment of body parts supported by the right amount of muscle tension against gravity. Without posture and the muscles that control it, we would simply fall to the ground.

## Why is good posture important?

- Helps us keep bones and joints in correct alignment.
- Reduces the stress on the body minimizing the likelihood of injury.
- Allows muscles to work more efficiently, using less energy and reducing fatigue.
- Helps prevent muscle strain, overuse disorders, and even back and muscular pain.

## Consequences of poor posture

Several factors contribute to poor posture--most commonly, stress, obesity, pregnancy, weak postural muscles, abnormally tight muscles, and high-heeled shoes. In addition, decreased flexibility, a poor work environment, incorrect working posture, and unhealthy sitting and standing habits can also contribute to poor body positioning.

## Symptoms of poor posture

The most common symptoms of poor posture are the following:

1. Neck Pain
2. Headaches/Migraines
3. Shoulder/Upper Back Pain
4. Arm/Hand Numbness and Tingling
5. Jaw Pain (TMJD)
6. Back Pain
7. Muscle Fatigue/Stress
8. Body Aches and Pain (Joint and Muscle)
9. Spinal Degeneration/Disc Disease

# Stretches for Home & Office

Do these quick stretches regularly to reduce fatigue and avoid injury:

1



Repeat 3 times,  
5 seconds each

**BACK EXTENSION**

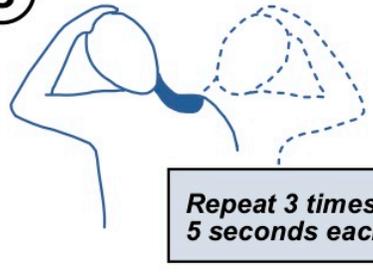
2



Do once for 15  
seconds

**NECK FORWARD**

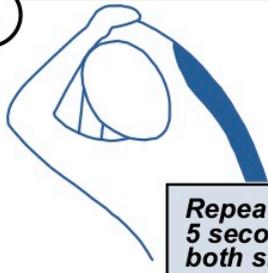
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Repeat 3 times,  
5 seconds each

**NECK LEFT & RIGHT**

4



Repeat 3 times,  
5 seconds each,  
both sides

**ELBOW PULLOVER**

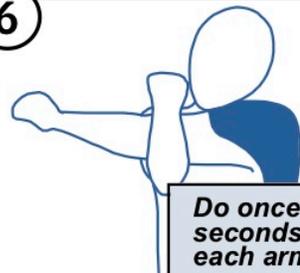
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Do once for 15  
seconds on  
each side

**SHOULDER OVER**

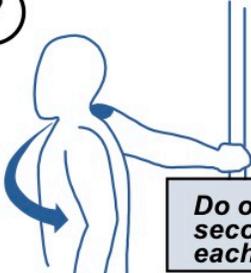
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Do once for 15  
seconds with  
each arm

**SHOULDER ACROSS**

7



Do once for 15  
seconds  
each arm

**SHOULDER BACK**

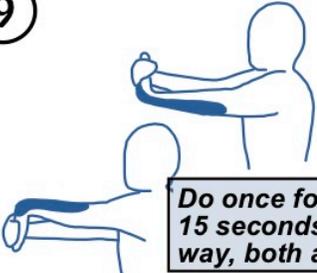
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Do once for 15  
seconds

**BRIDGE STRETCH**

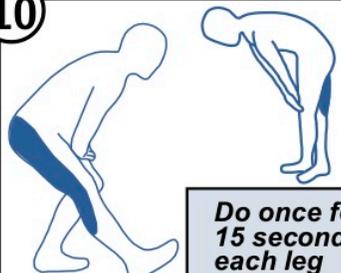
9



Do once for  
15 seconds each  
way, both arms

**FOREARM & WRIST**

10



Do once for  
15 seconds  
each leg

**HAMSTRING STRETCH**

11



Do once for  
15 seconds  
each leg

**CALF STRETCH**

12



Do once for  
15 seconds  
each leg

**QUAD & FLEXOR STRETCH**

Check with your physician before starting a new exercise program or if you have had recent joint trouble, muscle problems, or surgery

## Benefits of Regular Stretching:

- Increases range of motion, reduces sprain-strain injury risks, and helps control postural fatigue
- Warms and prepares muscles, pre-fueling them with oxygen and other needed chemicals
- Reduces internal friction and stiffness involving muscles, tendons, joints, and ligaments
- Reduces soreness and fatigue from long-term sitting, driving, bending, or reaching
- Improves comfort and decreases fatigue related to physical exertion, lifting, and using tools



### BACK EXTENSION AND SHOULDER BLADE PINCH

This exercise provides great fatigue relief for the lower, mid, and upper back. Stand with feet apart and gently lean backward to the point of mild tension with the arms also reaching back and squeezed toward each other. Tighten shoulder blades and low back muscles and hold for five seconds. Do three times.



### NECK FORWARD STRETCH

This stretches the back of the neck and the area where the neck joins the upper back. Tilt your head forward and lower the chin toward the chest, placing a hand on the back of your head for added stretch. Hold for 15 seconds.



### NECK LEFT AND RIGHT

This stretches the sides of the neck and the area where the neck joins the shoulders. Tilt head sideways toward shoulder without twisting the neck – move the ear directly toward the shoulder. Do this stretch once for 15 seconds on each side.



### ELBOW PULLOVER (LATERAL TORSO STRETCH)

This stretches the sides of the torso. Raise one arm overhead, grasp it at the elbow with other hand, and lean sideways from the waist, stretching the side of the trunk. Hold for 5 seconds, alternating for 3 times on each side.



### SHOULDER OVER (LATERAL SHOULDER STRETCH)

Raise one arm overhead, grasp it at the elbow with other hand, and pull the elbow gently across behind the head, stretching the muscles and soft tissues on the side of the shoulder joint and surrounding area. Hold for 15 seconds, and repeat for the other shoulder.



### SHOULDER ACROSS (POSTERIOR SHOULDER STRETCH)

Hold one arm straight across the chest and gently pull its elbow in closer and farther across. Hold for 15 seconds to stretch the back area of that shoulder. Repeat for the other shoulder.



### SHOULDER BACK (ANTERIOR SHOULDER AND CHEST STRETCH)

Stand with a stable shoulder-high object directly to your side. Extend the arm on that side to touch the object with your fingertips with arm straight. Gently rotate your entire body forward and away from the object while keeping fingertips in place on the object, stretching the front side of that shoulder. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat, facing the opposite direction in order to stretch the other shoulder.



### BRIDGE STRETCH FOR ARMS AND UPPER TORSO

Interlace fingers with palms pointing toward the sky, straightening the elbows and reaching as far upward as possible with both hands. Hold for 15 seconds.



### FOREARM AND WRIST STRETCHES

Extend one arm forward without bending the elbow. Bend the wrist upward, and use the other hand to gently pull fingers back toward you, stretching the muscles and soft tissues on the bottom of the forearm and wrist. Hold for 15 seconds. Then release and bend the same wrist downward, gently pulling it down and toward you with the other hand. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat both stretches with other arm.



### HAMSTRING STRETCH

Reduces soreness and stiffness in the hamstring muscles and tendons in the back of the thighs. Stand with one foot forward and tip up the toes of the front foot. Place both hands on the top of the rear leg for support and bend knee of your rear leg. Bend your knee more to stretch the hamstring area of front leg and hip. Hold for 15 seconds, then alternate legs and repeat. **Alternate version:** place one foot up on a low object with knee straight and gently lean forward to stretch back of leg. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with other leg.



### CALF STRETCH

Stand at arm's length in front of a tall stable surface such as a wall or tree. Place both hands on the surface at chest level, and move one foot back about as far as your shoulders are wide. Push the rear heel all the way onto the floor or ground, and lean forward toward your hands to stretch the calf muscles and tendons on that leg. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat for the other leg. This stretch can also help relieve heel discomfort.



### QUAD AND FLEXOR STRETCH

Place one hand on a stable surface for support. Bend one knee to lift a foot up behind you. Bend forward and grasp that ankle with the opposite-side hand, and slowly stand back upright, gently pulling the leg upward behind you to stretch front of thigh (quadriceps) and upper thigh area (hip flexors). Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with opposite leg and hand.

**DO NOT BOUNCE OR TWIST WHILE STRETCHING**

## How do I sit properly?

- Keep your feet on the floor or on a footrest, if they don't reach the floor.
- Don't cross your legs. Your ankles should be in front of your knees.
- Leave small gap between the back of your knees and the front of your seat.
- Your knees and hips at a 90° angles.
- Adjust the backrest of your chair to support your low- and mid-back or use a back support.
- Relax your shoulders and keep your forearms parallel to the ground.
- Avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time.

## How do I stand properly?

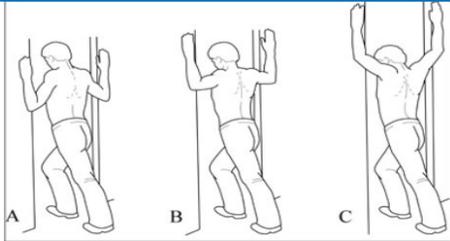
- Bear your weight primarily on the balls of your feet.
- Keep your knees slightly bent.
- Keep your feet about shoulder-width apart.
- Stand straight and tall with your shoulders pulled backward.
- Keep your head level-your earlobes should be in line with your shoulders. Do not push your head forward, backward, or to the side.
- Shift your weight from your toes to your heels, or one foot to the other, if you have to stand for a long time.

## What is the proper lying position?

- Find the mattress that is right for you. While a firm mattress is generally recommended, some people find that softer mattresses reduce their back pain. Your comfort is important. (Pillow Top/Pad)
- Sleep with a pillow. Special pillows are available to help with postural problems resulting from a poor sleeping position.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach.
- Sleeping on your side or back is more often helpful for back pain. If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your legs. If you sleep on your back, keep a pillow under your knees.

# Postural Correction Exercises

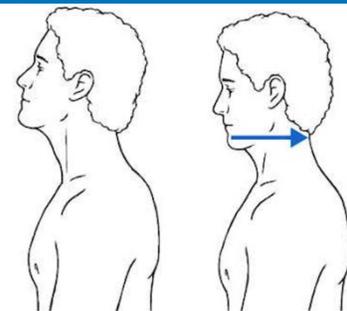
## Door Stretch



1. Door Stretch - Start with arms up high then lower down in different positions to stretch in different angles. Hold for 30-60 seconds, 2-3 sets.

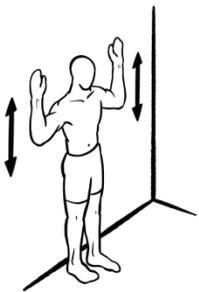
2. Chin-Tuck - Sitting or standing, start with shoulders rolled back and down. Place two fingers on your chin, slightly tuck your chin move your head back. Hold for 3-5 seconds, 10 times.

## Chin Tucks



and

## Wall Angels

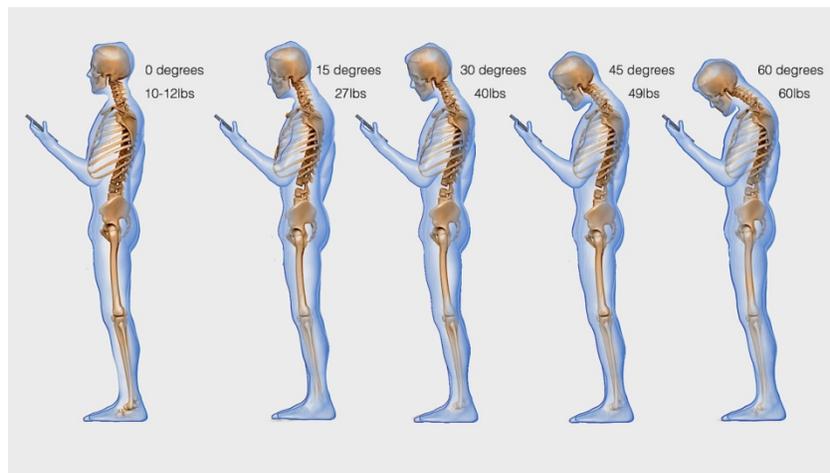
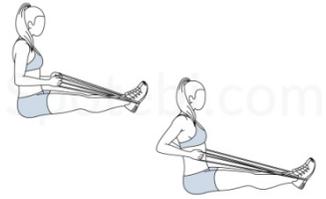


3. Wall Angels - Lean against the wall with your head and upper back against the wall and shoulders retracted/pulled down. Slide up and hold that position for 3 seconds, then go back down. Hold for 3-5 seconds,

10 times.

Seated Rows

4. Seated Rows - Seated on floor with your legs straight in front, wrap the elastic band around your feet, cross the band over each other. Sit up straight and pull your shoulder blades back and pull the band towards yourself. 10-12 reps, 3 sets



## Text Neck “Syndrome?”

### Signs and Symptoms of Text Neck

- Instant upper back or neck pain when using a handheld device.
- Nagging or sharp pain in the neck or shoulders at the end of the day.
- General shoulder pain and tightness.
- Intermittent or constant headache made worse when looking down or using the computer.
- Leads to posture problems and related health issues.

### Spinal Support and Stress Reduction

- Lie flat on back on floor or firm surface
- Place a rolled (FIRM!) towel under neck to allow neck to fall back into extension (chin up).

- Bend knees and place hands at the side of body.
- Controlled diaphragmatic breathing.

## Proper Texting Postures

### Standing and texting:

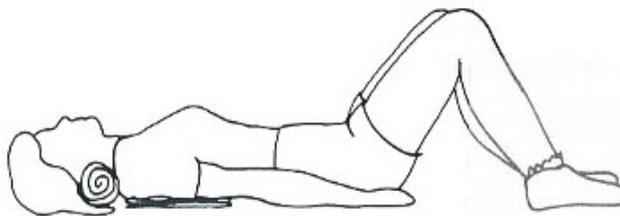
1. Stand tall and roll your shoulders back and down.
2. Place your left hand on your right rib cage. Place your right elbow on top of your left hand to support your right arm.
3. Use the right hand to view your phone and swipe with your thumb.
4. Switch sides often to avoid overuse/fatigue.
5. To type in this position, place your elbows on the bottom of ribs so you can hold the phone with both hands.

### Desk work and texting:

1. Sit tall in your desk chair and place your elbows on your desk.
2. Hold your phone at eye level.
3. Keep your shoulders back and down.

### Sitting and texting:

1. Move to the front of your chair or whatever you are sitting on and lean forward with a flat back. Place your elbows on top of your knees.
2. Hold your phone at eye level.
3. Keep your shoulders back and down.



## *Floor sitting and texting:*

1. Push your butt up against a wall or headboard behind you. Bend your knees in front of you and place your elbows on top of your knees.
2. Hold your phone at eye level.
3. Keep your shoulders back and down.