

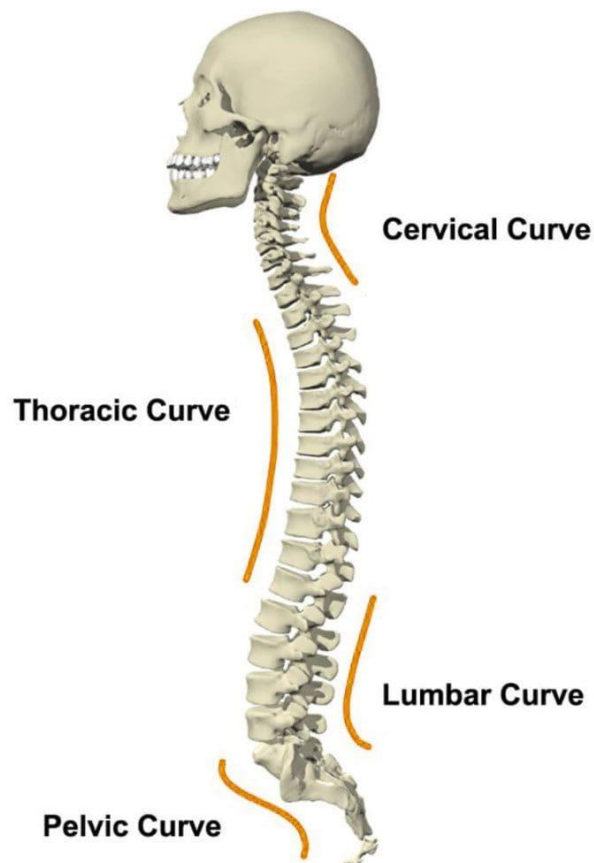
## The Importance of Posture

Posture is the natural way you hold your body, whether you're standing, sitting, lying down or moving. Your joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments are responsible for support and control.

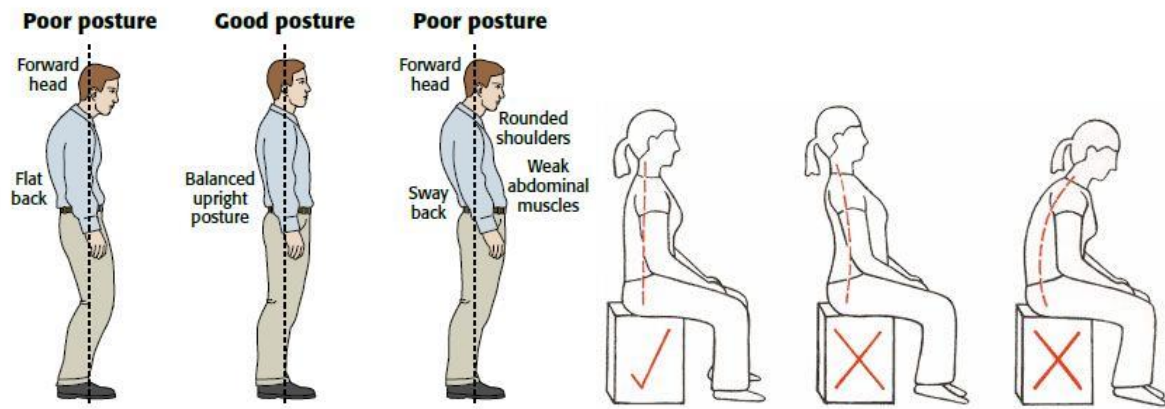
It is normal for individuals to have differences in posture based on their body and activity.

Usually we control our posture automatically, without really thinking about it. Repetitive movements or unsupported positioning can lead to poor posture over time. For example, reading or scrolling on your phone for hours with your head flexed down can result in overstretching of some of our neck muscles and tightening of others. This muscle imbalance will make it more difficult to hold the neck in a neutral posture over time, which will likely lead to pain and possibly headache.

Becoming more mindful of your posture throughout the day is one way to reduce the stress abnormal posture puts on your body.



Abnormal posture can happen when we are still, such as sitting or standing and can happen while we are active such as reaching or bending. When our body moves or is held in abnormal ways often enough, we can increase our risk for injury or pain over time.



Tips for improving your posture:

- Try being mindful of your posture for short periods, often during the day. Remember, posture is supposed to be automatic, so you don't need to always think about it. A reminder to correct your posture every hour or when you change positions is a healthy start.

- Gently tuck your chin straight back to get your ears in line with your shoulders

- Try to keep your shoulders right above your hips

- Gently squeeze your abdominal muscles to create a gentle inward curve in your low back. If you're sitting, placing a roll in the low back can help support this curve.

- Place both feet firmly on the ground with equal weight on each foot and slightly shifted toward the front of your foot instead of the heel. When sitting, place both feet on the floor or a footrest if you can't reach. Knees should be bent at a 90-degree angle and in line with your hips.

- If you use gait aids such as a cane, make sure it's adjusted to the correct height to promote normal alignment.

When abnormal tightness or weakness is present, an individual flexibility and strength program will help you recover and prevent injury in the future. When strengthening is not possible, your physiotherapist can show you techniques for positioning and supports to best align your body.