

GOOD POSTURE GUIDE



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POSTURE TIPS FROM OUR CHIROPRACTORS

Our posture is essential to maintain a healthy spine. Improved posture leads to better spinal health, enhancing our overall movement and functionality. In today's fast-paced world, where screens dominate our attention and physical inactivity is common, maintaining good posture is essential for overall well-being.

As chiropractors with a strong focus on spinal health and posture, we've provided thousands of clients with invaluable postural advice over decades. We share with you many of the same tips and advice.

This is your comprehensive guide to building better daily postural habits with practical, bite-sized tips. Keep it on hand and refer back to it whenever you need a quick reminder or reset.

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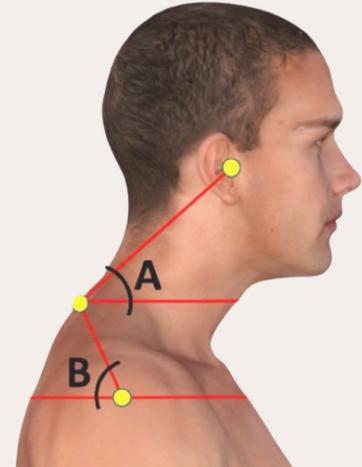
FORWARD HEAD POSTURE

A Leading Postural Pattern

Forward Head Posture (FHP) happens when the head shifts in front of the shoulders, placing extra strain on the neck and upper back, and often contributing to a "slouched" posture.

It's one of the most common postural problems people develop, and over time can lead to *spinal rigidity, pain, headaches and spinal degeneration*.

A **Dowager's hump** - the rounding or bump at the base of the neck - often appears alongside FHP and can be caused by *structural changes in the spine, fat deposition, or a combination of both*.



These changes don't occur overnight. They build slowly from daily habits like hunching over screens, phones, working at a desk, or any activity where your head stays forward for extended periods. Your posture will remodel to the environment you create.

To make lasting change, you need to notice your daily posture and positions. Identify habits that may be reinforcing poor postural patterns, then modify or replace them. Small changes add up. For example, scrolling on your phone between gym sets or while waiting for a coffee might not seem like much, but it adds up across the day.

What you'll learn throughout your Good Posture Guide will help you build healthier postural habits and protect your spinal health - with many lessons targeting forward head posture.

Let's get stuck into your first postural awareness activities



BETTER POSTURE

AWARENESS

1. Staying Tall

This is all about helping you tune into your **brain-body connection and feel your posture.**

This simple awareness activity helps decompress your spine by keeping you lifted tall. As you elongate through your spine, your rib cage can open at the front, making it easier to avoid your shoulders rounding forward.

The more you practise, the more habit you create. Try bringing this into everyday moments; at your desk, on your phone, while reading, or even when driving

TRY THIS POSTURE HACK

STEP 1. Gently tilt back and forth until you land in a comfortable midpoint - where you feel stable. This is a neutral pelvic position, a strong foundation.

STEP 2. Imagine two balloons - one at your sternum, the other at the crown of your head. These balloons are gently lifting you upwards. Let your spine elongate, your chest rise, and your chin stay lightly up.

As you try this, notice if you're forcing it. It should feel light, not stiff.



BETTER POSTURE

AWARENESS

2. Centering Your Balance

Let's look at your posture from the front. Many people develop habitual sideways leans - maybe always leaning to one side while driving, sitting on the couch, or at the desk. Over time, these patterns can pull you off balance. By noticing them and making small adjustments, you can bring yourself back toward a more centered, midline posture.

TRY THIS POSTURE HACK

STANDING EVENLY ON BOTH FEET:

Here's a simple trick to help set this pattern.

Write "**stand evenly on both feet**" on a sticky note and place it on the fridge, pantry, or anywhere you pass often during the day. Each time you see it:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Bring awareness to your body and notice how you're standing.
3. Make sure your weight is even on both legs.
4. Take a breath or two before moving on.

SITTING EVENLY ON BOTH SIT BONES::

Write "**sit evenly on both sides**" on another sticky note and place it somewhere you'll see while sitting (at your desk, laptop or living room).

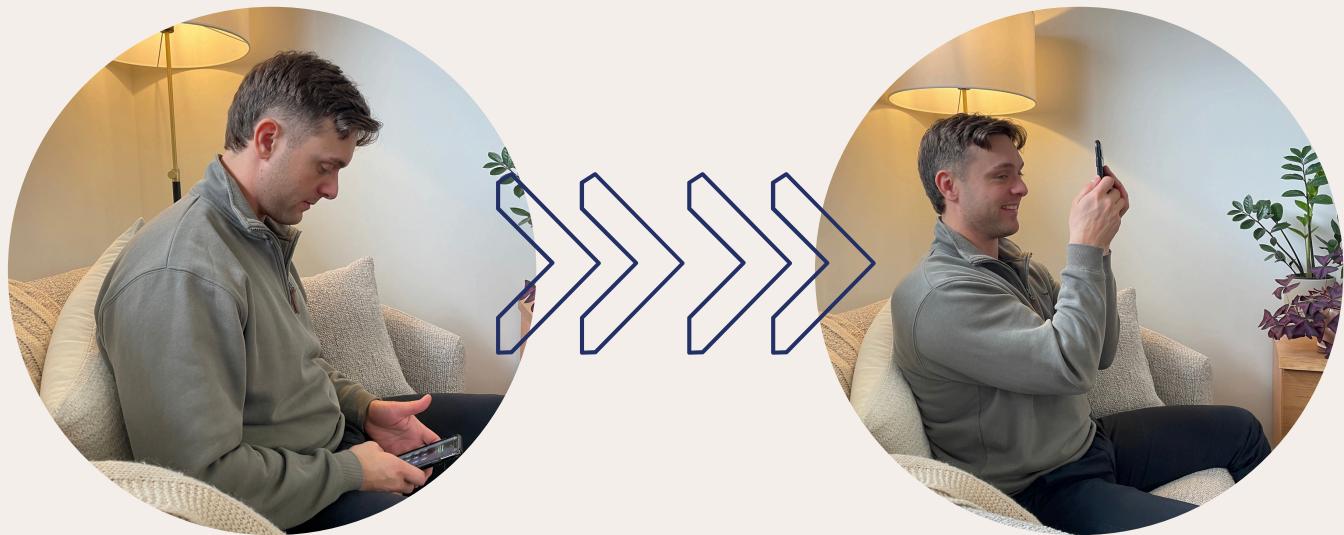
Each time you see it:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Tune into your body and sense how you're sitting.
3. Adjust so your weight is evenly balanced.
4. Take a breath or two to reset.

SMART POSTURE

For The Smartphone

Limiting unnecessary phone use is not only good for your posture, but for your overall health too. That said, avoiding phones altogether isn't realistic in today's world - so here are a few simple ways to protect your posture while still staying connected.



1. ELBOWS TOGETHER TRICK:

When sitting or standing, bring your elbows in toward each other as you hold your phone. This automatically lifts the screen higher, closer to eye level, and reduces the need to hunch your neck forward.

2. TRY LYING ON YOUR STOMACH

Instead of slouching on the couch or sitting propped up in bed with your head jutting forward, lie on your stomach with your elbows bent and your phone in front of you. This position encourages extension through your spine and helps counteract the forward-head posture many of us slip into.



YOUR ERGONOMIC WORKSTATION

Setting up your workspace correctly can help take pressure off your spine and keep you more focused throughout the day. Even without specialized equipment, these tips can help you make the most of your current setup.

CHAIR SETUP

- Tilt the back angle slightly from the standard 90 degrees.
- Rest feet flat on the ground. Consider using a foot rest if necessary.
- Maintain a 90-degree angle at your knees and hips.
- Use the lower back support if you have one, if not add a cushion.
- Armrests should not hinder the chair's mobility, allowing it to roll under the desk.

KEYBOARD POSITION

- Ensure that your wrists maintain a neutral position.
- Position your elbow to 90 degrees.
- Avoid placing documents between yourself and the keyboard.

MOUSE PLACEMENT

- Position your mouse so that your elbows are bent at a 90-degree angle, with your forearm resting comfortably on the desk or a gel pad.
- To prevent strain, consider training yourself to use the mouse alternating both your left and right hands.

MONITOR SETUP

- Eyes should line up with the middle of the screen.
- If using multiple monitors or screens, ensure you keep yourself as centred to avoid favouring rotating more towards one screen.
- A laptop stand and separate keyboard and mouse can help you maintain better posture.

MONITOR

Adjust distance and height: top of the monitor at eye-level and slightly tilted.

ARMS

Relax shoulders, forearms parallel to the floor. Minimal bend at the wrist.

CHAIR

Should have a backrest and armrests, adjust height.

LEGS

Thighs parallel to the floor.

FEET

Parallel to the floor, use a footrest if necessary.



BODY ALIGNMENT

- Allow your body to be lifted up tall and “long” through your spine.
- To support a neutral neck position, tuck your chin slightly and be lifted gently upwards through your spine.
- Avoid crossing your legs.
- When using the phone, refrain from cradling it between shoulder and ear or use earphones.
- Factor in short breaks every 30 minutes in between your bigger breaks. This may look like a short walk around the room.

NOTE:

You will never remain in a single, perfectly “aligned” posture, and if you were, it would be counterproductive to remain so rigid.

The above points serve as effective cues to consider. Additionally, it is completely fine to fidget and move in any way your body desires to assist natural movement.

Choosing The Right Chair

Now that you've set up your ergonomic workstation, it's time to think about your seating. The right chair can make a big difference in posture, comfort, and overall wellbeing. Below are a few non-traditional options that promote movement and support throughout the day.

1. EXERCISE BALL

Encourages natural spinal movement and activates your core and back muscles, helping to prevent slouching. Choose a size that keeps your knees slightly below hip height.

2. WOBBLE DISC

Placed on your existing chair, this creates an unstable surface that promotes gentle micro-movements, keeping your joints mobile and muscles engaged.

3. STANDING DESK

This allows the weight of your body to be transferred down your legs, reducing load on your lumbar spine. Bring your attention to standing with equal weight on both feet and take regular 30 minute breaks. Many people prefer to alternate between sitting and standing to prevent stiffness and improve circulation.

4. SADDLE CHAIR

This chair helps to maintain a normal forward lumbar curve, hence reduces the load in this area, and also helps to open up the hips. Often these chairs have a perturbed base, allowing you to move slightly and encourages core muscle activation.

Regardless of the seating option you decide on, remember - It's crucial to take regular breaks, stretch and move your body throughout the day.

Quick Setup Checklist: Run a posture audit on your workstation

- My screen is setup at eye level
- I'm positioned centrally in front of the screen/s
- My feet rest flat on the ground or footrest
- My hips, knees and ankle are in a neutral position
- My keyboard and mouse are set up comfortably
- I have a sit-stand option at my work desk
- I have lumbar support
- I change posture or take a break every 30–45 mins
- My weight is evenly distributed when sitting

HOW YOU SLEEP MATTERS

Just as your workspace and chair affect your posture during the day, how you sleep plays a crucial role in spinal health and overall wellbeing.

Quality sleep is essential - after all, we spend up to a third of our lives in slumber. The right mattress and pillow are key to supporting your spine and ensuring a truly restful night.

Before we dive into these key considerations, let's explore different sleep positions and how they impact posture.

BACK AND SIDE SLEEPING

- **Back sleeping** helps distribute weight evenly, helping minimise muscle strain on your back, neck, shoulders and hips.
- **Side sleeping** encourages neutral spinal alignment by keeping shoulders and hips stacked. Placing a soft pillow between your knees may help prevent pelvis twisting, supporting the lower body throughout the night.

STOMACH SLEEPING

While shifting positions at night is normal, limiting stomach sleeping is helpful. Turning the head to breathe puts strain on the neck, especially when it's consistently turned to one side for hours.

Additionally, stomach sleeping compresses the chest, which can affect breathing, digestion, and pelvic alignment



Side Sleeping (Provocative)

Associated with back pain and poor sleep



Side Sleeping (Fetal)

Legs supported and spine aligned



Stomach Sleeping (Prone)

Increased risk of neck and back pain



Back Sleeping (Supine)

Can help relieve lower back pain

Finding The Right Pillow

The right pillow is essential for supporting sleep posture and ensuring a restful night. Your pillow should help keep your spine aligned while you sleep, which depends on your preferred sleep position. While tossing and turning is normal, knowing whether you sleep mostly on your back or side can help you choose the best pillow for a restful night.

BACK SLEEPERS

- Use a **low-profile pillow with gentle contouring** to support the natural curve of the neck.
- Avoid pillows that are too high, which can push the head forward and strain the neck and upper spine.
- Shorter individuals or those with forward head posture may prefer a simple low-profile pillow for comfort.

SIDE SLEEPERS

- Choose a **higher pillow to fill the gap between the shoulder and ear**.
- Keeps the head in a neutral position, preventing tilting up or down.

Choosing And Caring For Your Pillow

MATERIALS & BRANDS:

There are many great manufacturers available online and in stores. We recommend choosing a brand that uses high-quality memory foam and offers adjustable features, making it easier to find the perfect height for your needs. If you're unsure, feel free to ask us for recommendations or our opinion.

MAINTENANCE

Some pillows come with machine-washable covers, while others may need more delicate care. We recommend a waterproof pillow protector to prevent early degradation of your pillow, deter dust mites, and prevent saliva and perspiration from soaking into the pillow.

FIRMNESS

Firmness is largely personal preference. As long as the pillow supports your spine and suits your sleep position, choose a firmness that feels comfortable for you.



Mattress Considerations

A supportive mattress is essential for quality sleep. Choosing the right one reduces pressure on your spine and helps you wake up feeling more refreshed. Here are a few points to consider.

SUPPORT

A good mattress provides zoned support for different sections of your body, especially at the shoulders and hips.

Pocket-sprung beds often deliver better comfort and reduce partner disturbance

FIRMNESS AND PILLOW TOP

This mostly comes down to preference. Most mattresses use a similar base, and the pillow-top controls firmness. Some brands offer split firmness for couples, and a topper is an easy way to adjust feel without replacing the mattress.

MATERIALS

Other than a latex mattress, most mattresses will be manufactured with a variety of materials, such as latex, foam, springs and wool. All these products will vary in quality and craftsmanship. A better mattress will be made with higher quality products to enhance sleep support, durability and comfort.

MATTRESS LIFESPAN

Mattress lifespan varies by manufacturer, usually somewhere between 7–11 years. As they age, mattresses lose support, which can affect comfort, spinal alignment, and sleep quality. Not sure about yours? Check the manufacturer's guidelines so you know when it's time for a replacement.

Many companies offer a trial period, so if you're not happy, you are free to exchange the mattress.

Sleep Posture Check-In: Run a posture audit on your sleep setup

- I've determined what position you sleep in mostly
- My pillow suits my sleeping position and supports my neck
(checked by Chiropractor)
- I've taken steps to shift away from stomach sleeping (if needed)
- If side sleeping causes sore hips or lower back, I place a pillow between my knees to stabilize my pelvis and reduce discomfort
- My mattress is within its recommended lifespan, feels supportive, and isn't sagging.

HOT TIP

It can be helpful to have two pillows to alternate between, depending on whether you sleep on your back or side. Just avoid stacking pillows under your head - multiple pillows push your neck into a forward-flexed position during sleep.

SPINAL SUPPORT ON THE ROAD

Driving - whether it's short commutes or long road trips - can sneakily add stress to your posture. This section is all about setting up your car to support your posture and reduce tension during (and after) time behind the wheel.

SEAT AND STEERING WHEEL POSITION

- Adjust your seat and steering wheel to keep your spine neutral and comfortable.
- Avoid sitting too far back, which can cause rounding of the head and upper back.
- Taller drivers may benefit from lowering the seat slightly to prevent shoulder rounding.
- Position the steering wheel within a comfortable range for your shoulders and elbows, and avoid locking your elbows while driving.

LUMBAR SUPPORT

- A lumbar support helps maintain the natural curve of your lower back.
- Options include commercial supports or a tightly rolled towel secured with elastic bands.
- Place the support in the curve of your lower back.
- If your hips slide forward and cause slumping, wedge your sit bones into the seat corner to maintain neutral pelvic and spinal alignment.

GETTING IN AND OUT OF THE CAR

- For those whose lower backs strain (or to protect your spine) when getting in and out of the car, here are a few tips:
- Sit down first while still facing out the door. Keep your knees together to avoid twisting your spine.
- Gently swing both legs into the car together.
- To exit, reverse the process: swing both legs out first, then stand up in one smooth movement.

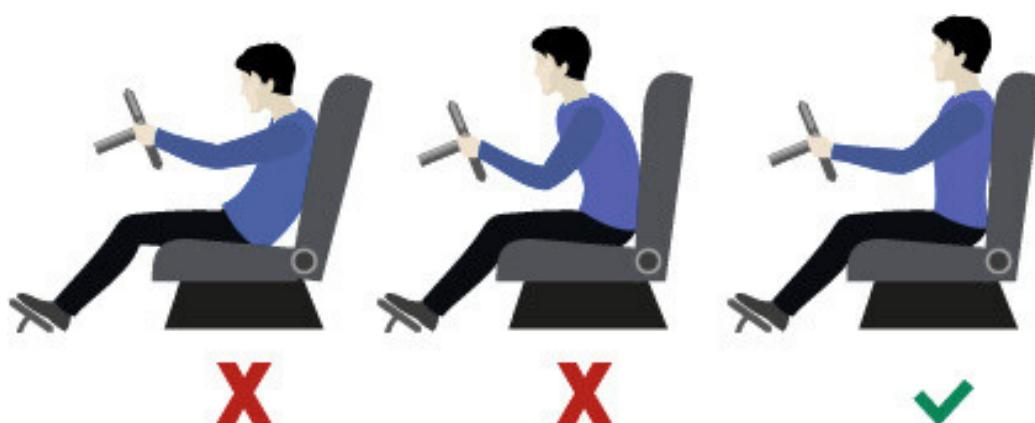
WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid objects that push your head forward against the headrest. Think of hair clips, ponytails or backwards caps.
- Slouching or collapsing into the seat as best as you can.
- Driving for long stretches without moving - take regular breaks and stretches as often as you can.

NECK STRENGTHENING HACK

- You can use your headrest to help gently strengthen your neck muscles.
- Only do this when the car is completely stopped and safe:
 - Sit tall and lightly press the back of your head into the headrest while adding a gentle chin tuck or slight upward tilt (try both and see what feels best).
 - Hold for 3–5 seconds, then relax.
 - Repeat as often as comfortable

It's important to take regular breaks during longer drives to stretch, move your body, and relieve tension, helping to keep your spine comfortable and supported.

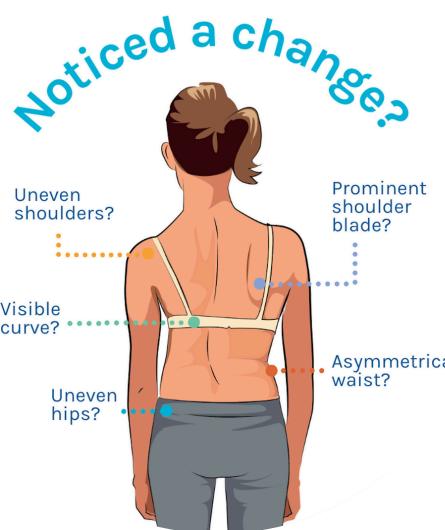


CHECKING KIDS FOR SCOLIOSIS

One of the most common times for scoliosis to develop is during the childhood years, while the spine is still growing. This is one of many reasons it's a good idea to have children checked by a Chiropractor. There's a simple screening assessment you can do at home every few months to keep an eye on your child's spinal growth and posture.

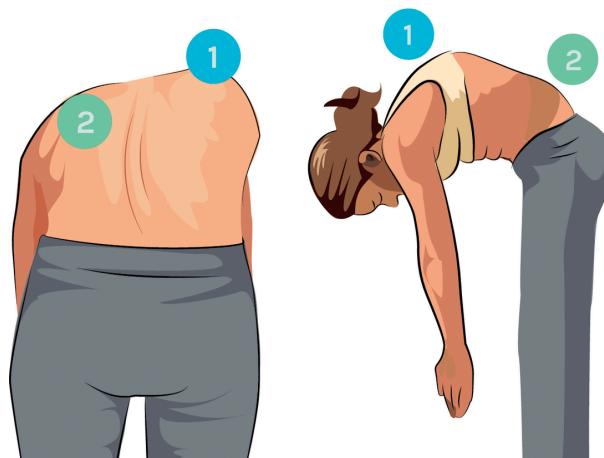
1. STANDING ASSESSMENT

Standing in a relaxed neutral posture, feet slightly apart and arms dangling by their sides



2. FORWARD BENDING ASSESSMENT

Bending forwards with feet together and knees straight, arms dangling together with fingers pointed down.



1 - THORACIC RIB HUMP
2 - LUMBAR HUMP

If you notice any unevenness or asymmetry, it's best to book a spinal health check with your Chiropractor promptly.

Postural habits form early — kids can develop slouching, rounded shoulders, or forward head posture from screen time or heavy school bags. Childhood bumps, falls, and sports injuries add to the strain, making it important to monitor spinal health. Chiropractic care can proactively support your child's growth and wellbeing, even if they show no symptoms.

FAQ

Q: CAN YOU CHECK THE HEIGHT OF MY PILLOW?

A: Your chiropractor will assess your current pillow to find out if it supports your spine, whether you are a back or side sleeper. Just check in with them.

Q: I SLEEP ON MY STOMACH! HOW CAN I CHANGE THIS?

A: Yes, you can! It will take time and persistence.

Here are a few tips to implement this:

- Make a pillow barrier around your body to prevent movement to different positions during the night.
- Place a pillow under your knees to help to relax your lower back.
- Set a simple evening routine and stick to a consistent bedtime. Try meditation or relaxation exercises, and keep bright lights and screens to a minimum.



Use Positive Affirmations To Create Better Habits!

- Lay in the position you want to change your sleep position to.
- Repeat aloud what you want to retrain your mind and body to do. This must be done in the positive - i.e. "I will go to sleep on my back, and I will wake up on my back."
- Repeat 20-30 times.
- Perform this nightly for at least 2 weeks to start creating a new sleep habit.

You can also use this positive affirmation "hack" for other habits. E.g. breathing through your nose and not your mouth. Just remember to repeat what you want to change in the positive.

FAQ

Q: HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BREAK FROM MY COMPUTER?

A: Every 30 minutes is ideal for movement breaks.

Q: MY HIPS SLIDE FORWARD AND I'M SLUMPING IN MY CHAIR, IS THERE SOMETHING CAN I DO?

A: Sure is! Check the “Posture Awareness Tip” (pg. 2) and wedge your hips firmly into the bottom corner of your chair to place your hips in a neutral position. This will allow to elongate your posture with more ease.



Q: ARE THERE POSTURES I SHOULD AVOID?

A: There isn't an inherently "bad" posture; if you can comfortably maintain a posture, then it's suitable for your body.

The problem occurs with repetitive postures over time (ie sitting in front of a computer, head flexed over a phone or always working over one side of the bench) which can lead to spinal imbalances, dysfunction, injury, and pain. Remember, your body is dynamic and designed to move, so being static or overly rigid in your posture can be counterproductive.

Most people know their posture could use some help - they just don't know what to do... The **Good Posture Guide** makes it a whole lot easier. If there's someone you know who needs this too, pass this PDF onto them - you'll be helping them too!

Feeling your posture is off and need to get it checked?

Book in for a thorough assessment and we'll show you exactly what's happening with your spine, with online bookings available anytime through our website.



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