

May is “National Correct Posture Month”

“Sit up straight!” “Don’t slouch!” are common demands that we may have heard from family members throughout the years. Now that we are in the smartphone era, it is time to embed those phrases back into our brain. Poor posture cannot only lead to back and neck pain, it can contribute to headaches, digestive problems, breathing problems, and circulation complications. Demonstrating good posture goes beyond standing up straight and requires more than keeping your shoulders back. Since May is “National Correct Posture” Month, we thought we’d take this opportunity to help you improve yours.

Posture refers to the position a person’s body is in while sitting or standing. Think of posture as you would a marriage; for better or for worse. There is no such thing as a perfect posture, but there is a good form and there is a bad form. In reality, it is very difficult to achieve appropriate posture all the time, especially since sedentary activities and the technology that we use, allows us to create recreational habits that are a primary cause of shoulder, neck, and back pain.

“Correct Posture Month” encourages people to think about how posture can affect your overall health. Research suggests that poor posture can actually shorten your life. This is because the physical restrictions of lungs and abdominal organs caused by slouching can create a much a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, and respiratory problems.

Advantages of a Good Posture

- Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are functioning properly
- Decreases the stress on the ligaments holding the spinal joints together
- Keeps the spine in line
- Prevents muscle fatigue
- Prevents backaches and muscular pain

How to Improve Your Posture

For starters, it helps to photograph you standing front, back and sideways. This will help you analyze your own alignment. Poor posture displays itself when the head is forward while the back is flat, or while the head is forward with shoulders rounded and a sway back. Tips for maintaining a strong posture include:

- Stand tall – relax and allow your head to float to the ceiling
- Stand grounded – make sure that firmly planted on the floor
- Center your pelvis – arch your low back and tuck in your pelvis.
- Open your chest – keep your neck lengthened and head tall as you pull your shoulders back down
- Level your head – look straight ahead and tuck your chin to keep it leveled