

7 Weird Ways Your Posture Messes With You

Your Mom Was Right... “Sit Up Straight”

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We talk about posture all the time with our athletes and clients. Poor posture affects our flexibility, leads to increased joint strain, and affects athletic performance. Here are a few more reasons you and your athletes need to pay more attention to your posture. Now, Sit Up Tall!!!

1. Deepens depression

In a recent study from San Francisco State University, students were told to either walk down a hall in a slouched position or to skip. The slouchers reported increased feelings of depression and lower energy than skippers.

That’s no surprise to posture expert Carol Krucoff, a yoga teacher and author of *Healing Yoga for Neck and Shoulder Pain* and founder of healingmoves.com. “Even our language reflects this connection between proper posture and emotional affect—someone weak is called spineless and someone proud has backbone,” she says.

The fix: Imagine there’s a headlight right in the middle of your chest at the sternum (breast bone), says Krucoff. Sitting or standing, your headlight should always shine forward. Now, keeping your head centered over your shoulders, extend your head toward the ceiling without lifting your chin.

2. Can lead to career problems

Slouching doesn’t just hurt your attitude—it can affect how people see you. “You don’t want to walk into somebody’s office slouching and bent over, because people really do perceive you as not as vital,” says Janice Novak, author of *Posture, Get it Straight*. Strengthening your upper back muscles by doing Ys, Ts, and Bent Ts on a gymnic ball is a good way to start. If you are talking to a coach or a recruiter having a better posture will show them you are more confident in your abilities to be a contributor on their team.

The fix: To avoid being a slouch on the job, Novak recommends doing this exercise at your desk: Lift the bottom of your ribcage an inch or two off your hipbone, pulling your shoulder blades back and down. To make sure you maintain the position, pin a ribbon to top and to bottom of your shirt and keep it taut for 10 minutes at a time.

3. Backs you up – yes we said it and this effects your recovery as an athlete

When you sit in a crunched position, your viscera (intestines) are folded up, too. Your intestines need movement to help pass things through so prolonged sitting with poor posture (think about the posture you are in now if you are at your desk or your athlete when they are studying for an exam) definitely affects this.

The fix: We look to Yoga for a simple exercise to help. One pose that can rev up a sluggish gut is the Cobra: See the figure below and make sure you don't experience any back pain with this pose.

Again, any posture that “opens” you will be beneficial



4. Increases risk of death and disease

A recent Australian study found that after the age of 25, every single hour of television—i.e., slouching on the couch—reduced the viewer's life expectancy by 21.8 minutes. Plus, when English researchers cross-referenced sitting time with health outcomes in a different study, they found that those people who sat the most more than doubled their risk of developing diabetes and had a 147 % increase in their risk for cardiovascular disease, even if they exercised.

The fix: Don't let the box beat you. Stand up and move around during the commercials. Don't sit longer than 30 minutes with out standing for a brief moment. Also, start off watching TV by sitting in the floor. If you sit in the floor, you will find yourself doing some type of stretching for your hips and low back and this will lessen the effects of “the couch”

5. Makes you look heavier

Does this chair make me look fat? Many people think we have become a nation of professional sitters. When you are slouched over, your internal organs have nowhere to go but down and out and you immediately look fatter. This like those mirrors you walk by at the carnival.

The fix: The solution for this one is simple. Get up and move. When we stand as opposed to sit, we burn 20% more calories and strengthen our muscles, boost metabolism and increase bone density.

6. Reduces your circulation

Our bodies are machines that move fluid and gases back and forth. Prolonged sitting, especially with your legs crossed, can reduce blood flow, increase pressure and even place additional stress on veins.

The fix: To get blood flowing to your lower body stand up and find your best posture then lift one leg up so your thigh is horizontal to ground. Keep your standing leg locked (not hyperextended) and hold for five strong breaths, pushing your breathing down to your diaphragm. Repeat on the opposite side. This helps improve your balance which you know we are a big fan always working this area.

7. Stresses you out

A recent study from Harvard showed that when people who adopted powerful postures (open shoulders and straight spines) had a 20% increase in testosterone levels and a 25% decrease in cortisol levels—but people who slouched had a 10% decrease in testosterone and a 15% increase in cortisol. That translates into low self-confidence and high stress. And sitting slouched over can compound the problem, says Krucoff. “Shallow chest breathing strains the lungs, which must move faster to ensure adequate oxygen flow, and taxes the heart, which is forced to speed up to provide enough blood for oxygen transport. The result is a vicious cycle, where stress prompts shallow breathing, which in turn creates more stress,” she says.

The fix: Take everyday cues—a ringing phone, a stoplight—as reminders to take relaxed abdominal breaths to combat stress. Here’s how to make sure you’re breathing deeply: Rest your hand below your belly button; you should feel your belly expand as you inhale. One breathing exercise is called 4-4-6 which simply means to inhale on a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, and exhale for a count of 6. Make sure these are long counts and work up to doing this for 10 minutes once a day.

****Remember to**

- 1. Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat**
- 2. Obtain adequate amounts of protein**
- 3. Work on Flexibility**
- 4. Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multi-vitamin**

Let me know if I can help. Email me at architechsports@gmail.com

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God Bless,

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