

**PROPER POSTURE HELPS TO REDUCE STRESS ON YOUR MUSCLES AND LIGAMENTS, WHICH DECREASES THE CHANCE OF AN INJURY.**



## IMPROVING POSTURE TO REDUCE ACHES & PAINS

### What are the benefits?

Improving your posture will help you become more aware of your body, which allows you to recognize which muscles need a little more focus.



#### Body alignment

Poor posture can strain the muscles at the back of your head, neck, upper back and jaw. This can put pressure on nearby nerves and trigger what are known as tension-type or muscle-spasm headaches. Proper body alignment not only helps prevent pain and injury, but also can boost your confidence and mood.

#### Did you know?



A study published by the CDC has shown that the use of a sit-stand desk can reduce the amount of sitting by 224% and reduce neck and upper back pain by 54%.

### What is proper posture?

Proper posture is teaching your body to sit, stand, or lie in positions that reduce the amount of strain on your muscles and ligaments. Having proper posture means your body is in the correct muscular balance, which reduces your chances of injury. Adding some daily stretching activities and having the proper work set up can go a long way toward fixing your posture!



**TIP:**  
Short three to five-minute walks can help prevent tightness that causes aches and pains

When we spend too much time in one position, our body will start to adjust and cause areas of our body to tighten up. This will lead to muscle imbalances within the body, which causes aches and pains. Some ways to help counteract this are to add more movement and flexibility in your day. One simple strategy is to go for a short three to five-minute walk every hour. Walking helps to strengthen muscles that become weak from sitting too long. Another strategy is to add just a few daily stretches which loosen your muscles that have become tight from being kept in the same position.

# THE PATH TO BETTER POSTURE



## Five stretches for you to perform if you find yourself sitting all day

**Ear to shoulder.** To stretch your neck, bring your right ear towards your right shoulder, take your right hand up over your head to rest on your left cheekbone. Do not pull your head; your hand is to apply a little more pressure. Perform for 20 seconds each side.

**Overhead Arm Reach.** Interlock your fingers, reach up as high as you can and keep your palms facing the ceiling, lean side to side and hold for 10-20 seconds each side.

**Chest Stretch:** Place your hands on lower back with elbows pulled back. Perform for 20-30 seconds.

**Figure 4:** To stretch your hips, in a seated position, place your right ankle on/near your left knee, lift your left leg up slightly or push gently down on right knee, lean slightly towards knee that is up to feel it even more. Perform for 20 seconds each side.

**Hip Flexor:** Start standing, take a step forward with right foot and keep left knee bent slightly, push your hips forward. (Advanced: add the Overhead Arm Reach and lean towards your right leg). Perform for 20 seconds each side.

**TIP:** Proper body alignment not only helps prevent pain and injury, but also can boost your confidence and mood.

## Proper desk set-up

**Screen placement** – Place the top of your work screen in line with your eyes to limit the amount forward neck lean.

**Desk height** – Shoulders should be relaxed and elbows at 90 degrees. Desk height should be slightly below natural elbow height. The use of books and boxes can help find the right height.



**Alternate sitting and standing** - If available, choose a sit-stand desk option or height adjustable desk to allow for different positions throughout the day.

**Feet placement** – Keep your feet on the floor. Dangling feet can cut off circulation.

**Use a wireless mouse and keyboard** - If your laptop is elevated to the proper height to make your neck happy, it will be hard to use the keyboard or mouse without straining your shoulders.

**Sources:** Mayo Clinic, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention