

Posture Pointers

The quality of your posture can make a big difference in your life. Good posture can make you look and feel younger, stronger and more confident; and can help improve your breathing, advance your sports performance, decrease your risk of injury and improve your biomechanical efficiency. And, over the course of your life, good posture can prevent painful physical strain in your joints.

How can you tell if your posture needs improving? Physical therapist Deborah Ellison lists these telltale signs

- collapsed arches in your feet
 - an elevated hip or shoulder
 - one side of the body rotated forward or back
 - pelvis and hips tilted to the front, back or side
 - rounded back
 - drooping chest and shoulders
 - head jutting forward
- These are indications that

your body has gotten locked into poor movement patterns for any of a number of reasons, including muscle imbalance, compensation for injuries, ergonomic problems or poor alignment during fitness and sports activities.

Changing Habits

It is possible to change poor postural habits. Developing proactive postural habits builds a foundation for a fit body that functions effectively, says Ellison. Try the following 10 tips for improving your posture:

1 Find Neutral. Your personal trainer can help you recognize what neutral alignment looks and feels like in your body. This is the position in which the spine is best equipped to deal with external stress and strain. You should be able to move into neutral alignment while sitting, standing and moving.

2 Remind Yourself Frequently. Suki Munsell, PhD, a registered movement therapist

in Corte Madera, California, suggests that you create ways to remind yourself to do posture checks throughout the day, such as setting a sports watch to alert you hourly. Ellison recommends posting printed reminders on your desk or bulletin board.

3 Vary Your Position. Counter the damaging effects of constant sitting by standing as much as possible. Standing in correct alignment requires much less muscular effort than sitting with proper form does. Try using a drafting table so you can work standing; stand up or lie down frequently when you are watching television or talking on the phone.

4 Develop Your Hip Muscles. Weakness or inflexibility of the hip muscles that attach to the pelvis may impact the alignment of your pelvis and lower back. Seek an exercise program that includes flexibility training for the hip flexors, extensors, abductors, adductors and rotators.

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MOVEMENT STUDIO CLASS SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		8:30 am Danielle Pilates	5:30 am Jenn Boot Camp	10:30 am Rita Power Vinyasa Yoga	7:00 am Jenn Boot Camp	8:30 am Rita Power Vinyasa Yoga
			8:30 am Rita Power Vinyasa Yoga*		8:30 am Rita Power Vinyasa Yoga	
					9:30 am Danielle Pilates	

*All levels welcome but you will sweat
Updated 12/01/06. Schedule subject to change. Please check back regularly.



Jenn



Kerry

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Upcoming Events

20th Annual Big Climb for Leukemia

Sunday, March 18, 2007
at the Columbia Center
in downtown Seattle. The
69-flight course includes
1,311 steps, 19 steps per
flight and 788 feet of
vertical elevation.

www.leukemia-lymphoma.org
Register at Active.com

Road Runner Sports Love 'em or Leave 'em Valentine's Day Dash 5K Run/Walk

Sunday, February 11, 2007
9:30 AM
Green Lake Park, 7201 East
Green Lake Drive N, Seattle
Register at Active.com

Disclaimer

Fitness and health information presented on these pages is intended as an educational resource and is not intended as a substitute for proper medical advice. Consult your physician or health care professional before performing any of the exercises described on these pages or any exercise technique or regimen, particularly if you are pregnant or nursing, or if you are elderly or have chronic or recurring medical conditions. Discontinue any exercise that causes you pain or severe discomfort and consult a medical expert.

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5 Perform the Right Abdominal Exercises. Work with your trainer to learn exercises that train the abdominals to hold the pelvis in neutral alignment. Do more active stabilization training, rather than just traditional torso curls and sit-ups, which focus almost exclusively on the trunk-flexing function of the obliques.

6 Extend Your Back. Learn how to correctly perform back extension exercises--while standing, on hands and knees, prone on elbows or prone with

arms extended. Research has shown that these exercises often improve or eliminate back pain.

7 Don't Ignore Your Upper Body. Seek exercises that help reintegrate the natural coordination and rhythm between the shoulder and shoulder girdle, and strengthen the scapular and arm muscles.

8 Consider Alternative Exercise Formats. Yoga and exercises based on the work of Joseph Pilates emphasize alignment and controlled movement of the spine, which can greatly improve your posture habits.

9 Visualize. Munsell suggests that you visualize giant redwoods that stand erect with great dignity for hundreds of years; or imagine growing taller as you stretch your arms above your head. While you walk, concentrate on your posture and imagine yourself moving in perfect alignment.

10 Check With Specialists. Postural problems can have a serious negative impact on your health and quality of life. In addition to your personal trainer, you may want to consult with a podiatrist, an orthopedic specialist, a physical therapist or a chiropractor.

Exercise More, Sneeze Less

As the cold and flu season kicks into high gear this winter, it's good to know that regular exercise may be your first line of defense.

Although there has been some debate about the effects of exercise on immunity, a new study suggests that being active may actually reduce the number of colds people get each year.

Researchers from the University of South Carolina in Columbia surveyed 547 healthy adults at regular intervals over the course of one year.

Participants noted both their activity levels and the number of colds they had experienced. For this study, moderate or vigorous exercise was defined as anything more strenuous than a walk, including household chores and leisure activities.

The average adult will suffer through two to five colds per year. However, study participants who reported being most active had 25 percent fewer colds than those who were the least active.

The caveat to this study is that previous research has demonstrated that too much or too little exercise can have an adverse effect on the immune system, which could up one's risk of developing a cold.

Marathon runners, for example, appear to be more likely to develop a cold in the week immediately following a race than non-runners.

The key is to strike the right balance between exercise, good nutrition and adequate sleep.

Source: *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 2002; 34, 1242-1248

 Fitness Matters



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Healthy Resolutions for the Whole Year



Build a Support System

Get the support of your family, friends and co-workers. If your resolution involves quitting a serious addiction like smoking, drinking or an eating disorder, get professional help and join a support group if possible. Remember that you are your best supporter. You are trying to improve your own health. Appreciate what you have and then try to treat it a little bit better than you have in the past. If you take better care of your body, you will feel better and perform better at all that you do. Keep in mind that a well-thought-out resolution can be a useful tool to help you live your life the best way possible, starting from the inside.

AS THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF THE New Year slip away, do you find your resolutions slipping away as well? Resolutions should be reasonably attainable so that you are setting yourself up for success rather than disappointment. Try focusing on small intermediate goals that will ultimately lead you to your primary goal. Do not expect to be perfect. Aim for a healthy lifestyle that you will feel comfortable sticking with.

Take Small Steps

Simply establishing the goal of leading a healthy lifestyle should make you feel good about yourself. To make that goal more attainable, come up with small goals you know you can meet each day to help keep yourself feeling positive. Accomplishing the smaller goals will leave you with a more immediate feeling of success. If your goals are too large, you may get caught up in them and feel disappointed when you do not see immediate results.

Small behavior-change plans are easier to stick to than vague resolutions like “I will lose 10 pounds.” If your resolution is too large, add a plan of action that will guide you toward your goal. Rather than “I will exercise more,” try “I will go for a walk at lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays and work out in the gym Mondays and Fridays.” This way you can feel a sense of accomplishment every day, and if you miss a day, you can get right back on track rather than feeling like a failure.

Change for Yourself

Any goals that you set should come from a sincere desire to change for yourself. Research has shown that negative feelings are a frequent cause of relapse in behavior-change programs, and resolutions that feel like punishment can cause negative feelings. All resolutions should be perceived as positive changes that will help you reach optimal health and well-being. Don't decide to change to please anyone other than yourself. And remember, resolutions are an opportunity for you to look forward in a positive way rather than to punish yourself for past behaviors.

Be Creative

Perhaps you can find ways to exercise while also accomplishing other goals. If weather permits, try walking to do errands that are in close proximity to your home or office. Maybe you need to spend more time with your family. Try walking with a family member or bringing your children along on bikes while you walk or jog. If your goal is to make new friends, try taking classes where you will meet other people who share your same exercise interests.

Be Realistic

Be sure that your plan of action is realistic. Plan to work out at times when it is convenient for you. If you are not a morning person, do not plan to work out early in the morning or you'll just be setting yourself up for failure. Try to make things as easy as possible for yourself. Set your goals at reasonable heights so that you can reach them one by one without feeling overwhelmed.

The only way your goal is going to become reality is if you believe in it and, most of all, if you believe in yourself. It may help you reinforce your goal if you can find a realistic role model who is actually living your goal. If they can do it, so can you!

Anticipate Roadblocks and Reward Yourself for Successes

If things like weather and illness will prevent you from sticking to your plan, make alternate plans for situations that you cannot avoid. Most importantly, do not let a missed day or two throw you completely off target. Instead, do your best to get back on track as quickly as possible, which should not be extremely difficult if you have set appropriate goals.

It is easier to stick to your plan when you feel good about yourself. Try to find a new way to reward yourself when you meet your smaller goals. If you are trying to eat healthier, be sure that all of your meals are still delicious, and allow yourself a small dessert after a few days of healthy habits. Be sure to get involved in activities that keep you feeling happy and fulfilled.

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