

Posture Advice



This postural advice will help make sure what is happening in your home and office is supporting your care in our office. Posture relates to the alignment of your spine in two ways. Firstly, when you have a misalignment that remains uncorrected for weeks it begins to distort your posture as your body tries to compensate for the nerve pressure. Alternatively, if you are in distorted postures a lot over time it will cause misalignment resulting in long term distorted posture. You should not have to force yourself to be in normal, balanced posture. That is your natural posture when your spine is in normal alignment. Your chiropractic care is removing nerve pressure and allowing your body to return to normal alignment and posture. Identifying any common postural stresses and modifying or removing them will ensure the fastest correction of your posture and long term correction. Here are instructions on minimizing the most common postural stresses:

SLEEPING

Do not sleep on your stomach. That always causes neck subluxations. If you wake up that way, consciously roll over every time and in 4-6 weeks that habit should be gone. Sleeping on either side or your back is best. If on your back you only need a very small pillow to support the curve of your neck. If on your side you need a pillow large enough to keep your head level with your spine. Have someone assess your head position when lying on your pillow. Orthopedic pillows usually have a small and large end and you just rotate it when you change positions (small end if on your back, large if on your side). If you want a more natural pillow than foam you need different pillows when on your side than when on your back (or use a corner of the pillow when on your back). Your mattress should be firm enough to not sag in the middle or around your hips, but soft enough that there is no space between the bed and your lower back or waist.

DESK POSTURE

Sitting for long periods is really stressful on your body but the right posture can make a huge difference to the amount of stress. Firstly for men, make sure your wallet is NOT in your back pocket when sitting, keep it in your jacket or front pocket. Use a high backed chair and keep your back and neck relaxed and resting against the backrest of the chair with your head not forward on your shoulders. Your elbows are rested at your side or on armrests. With relaxed arms your hands should just rest onto your desk, place your keyboard and mouse where your hands naturally fall. Bring everything close to you (keyboard, mouse, paper, phone) so you do not have to reach out for them. Prolonged reaching creates tight shoulders. Close your eyes and move your head back and forth and stop with your head in its natural position and mark the spot you are looking at. Position your monitor directly over that spot, at eye level, and close enough that you don't feel the need to bring your head forward. If reading, prop the book up so you don't have to hunch forward. If looking down at a desk, look down with your eyes rather than flexing your head forward. Use a fit ball as a chair for an hour a day for a core workout or use wobble cushion exercises available from us. March aggressively for 30 seconds every 30 minutes to totally reset your posture and muscles. If that scares you then at least take breaks every half an hour even if it is just to the water cooler and back or standing up for seconds. That breaks the pattern of your posture developing into a habit. There will always be stress on your lower back and pelvis from sitting for long periods. Any day you sit for more than a few hours make sure you do an activity that involves full range of motion such as a workout, yoga, or a run. The 30/30 march needs to be part of your ritual if you have lower back issues.

DRIVING POSTURE

Do the same things as above making sure the steering wheel is close to you and your elbows are at your side. Keep your head two inches or less away from the headrest. Take frequent breaks to give your spine and pelvis a rest. Also make sure you are not tilting your shoulder down on one side. Check this by turning the rear view mirror at yourself so you can analyze your driving posture every few minutes for a while. **MOVE IT BACK!**

Be aware of other postures in your work or life that put your spine into distorted positions and find alternatives such as headsets, higher monitors, longer handled tools, etc. If you can't find alternatives talk to me!