



Stepping Stones to a better posture: Perfect Posture

British Chiropractic Association offers advice to keep you standing tall

According to consumer research by the British Chiropractic Association, over half (56%) of the UK population currently believe they have a bad posture.

Having and maintaining a good posture is a major step in preventing back pain. Leading busy lifestyles, the basic warning signs of back problems can go unnoticed. Of course, no one is immune from back pain but the **British Chiropractic Association** is here to help. By following a series of simple guidelines, which can be incorporated, into our everyday lives, you can help to reduce the risk of back pain.

Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association explains: "The ideal posture would allow for a plumb line to hang straight through your ear, shoulder, hip, knee, ankle. Try and stand relaxed but gently contracting your abdominal muscles. When sitting the same is true, the gravity line should pass thorough ear, shoulder and hip.

The British Chiropractic Association makes the following recommendations for maintaining a good posture:

- **Give your posture a sporting chance** - any unaccustomed exercise can put you at risk of back pain. You might only play a relaxed low-risk sport once a week but you still need to prepare yourself sufficiently – mentally and physically. Warming up and warming down is essential to ensure that your joints and muscles don't get a shock. Strong abdominal muscles can help to prevent a potential bad back
- **Don't just sit there** – on the other hand, lack of exercise is your worst enemy. Regular exercise is integral as the fitter you are the less likely you are to injure yourself. Simple activity such as stretching and shoulder shrugging all helps to keep your back in line. Do not sit for prolonged periods.
- **Don't drive yourself around the bend (literally)** - On the school run, or picking up the monthly shop the last thing on our minds is the state of our backs while in the driving seat. But there is almost twice as much pressure

on your back when you are sitting incorrectly than there is if you stand up. So relax - a relaxed driving position reduces stress on the spine, allow your seat to take your weight, try and make sure you are sitting as far back in the car seat as possible so it can support you fully.

- **Sit up straight in front of the TV** - when you are relaxing in front of the box, the tendency is to "slouch" when sitting. The ideal sitting position is to let the seat take your weight so if possible keep as much of your body in contact with the chair so that your whole body is supported
- **Carry with care** - be aware of the potential dangers of putting more strain on one side of the body more than the other. Any bag that spreads equal weight on both shoulders is preferred, so if you can carry items in a rucksack - do it! Adjust the straps of a bag to keep it as close to the back as possible, which ensures weight is evenly distributed across the back.
- **Footloose and fancy free** - having good footwear is an essential part of having a good posture - a factor that is often overlooked. Soft-soled shoes, which are supportive and have a good grip, are recommended.
- **Perfect PC posture** - a lot of people spend hours in front of a PC each day - make sure you are sitting comfortably and have your spine supported. And don't forget to move around, limit yourself to forty-minute sittings and take regular breaks. If possible have your arms supported.
- **And so to bed** - try and adopt a sleeping position, which creates less physical stress on the back first thing in the morning, for example, lay on your side not on your front with your neck twisted. When you wake up, wake your body up and try some gentle stretches like drawing your knees to your chest.
- **Pain is a warning sign** - if you still have problems consult a BCA chiropractor. Find your nearest chiropractor by calling **0118 950 5950** or visit **www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk**

Overall, your back is most at risk when either embarking on an unaccustomed burst of activity, or during a mundane activity where you pay less attention to your posture. Regular exercise and awareness is key to maintaining a healthy back - just keep thinking of that plumb line!

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