

POSTURE

Why is good posture important?

Neck and back pain can be caused due to bad posture, causing over stretching or tightening of the ligaments and tissues surrounding the joints in the spine.

The muscular strain can lead to tiredness along with pain.

If you improve your posture you can improve the condition of your spine, joints and muscles.

What affects posture?

Many things affect posture including work, hobbies, habits, general fitness and health. These include spending long periods of time working at computer systems, prolonged lifting activities and those who are tall might have a tendency to round shoulders in attempt to become the same size as others.

Sitting posture

- Sit well back in the chair, making sure your low back is well supported. This can be done by using a lumbar roll/support or a small rolled up towel.
- Imagine you have a string attached to the top of your head pulling you upwards.
- Shoulders should be slightly back and relaxed down.
- Thighs should be supported and feet flat on the floor
- Do not cross your legs or lean to one side
- Sitting on a slight slope e.g. using a foam chair wedge, so your legs are higher than your knees may help you keep this posture.



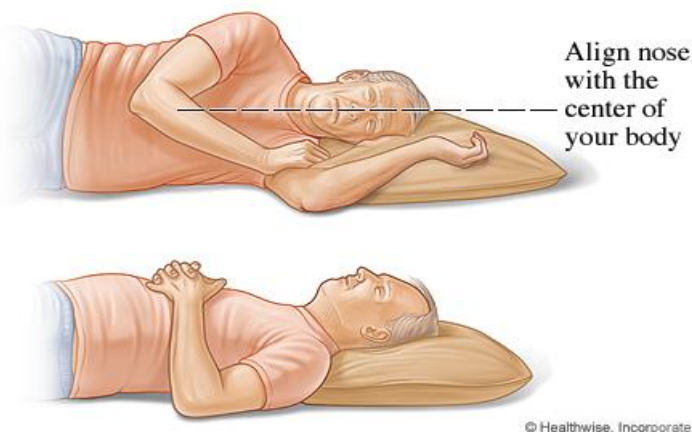
With **all of us** in mind.

Driving

- The back rest should be reclined to 15-20 degrees and the seat moved forward to enable easy reach of the pedals.
- If there is an integral lumbar support in the seat then this should be used, although this may not always suit you. Alternatively a lumbar roll or rolled up towel would be useful to maintain the position of the lumbar curve.
- Frequent stops are advisable on long journeys in order to prevent muscle fatigue.

Lying posture

- When lying it is important to try and keep your spine in a straight position as much as possible. This means avoiding using too many pillows which cause your neck to be put on a stretch, either to the side if lying on your side or forward if lying on your back.



- Try to limit yourself to one or two pillows. Use a pillow which supports the hollow in your neck. A towel rolled to about 3 inch and placed within the pillowcase can be used to support the hollow in the neck.

OR

- Tie a piece of string around the middle of a soft pillow to make a butterfly shape in which your neck and head will fit.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach unless specifically told to do so by your therapist as this can place great strain on your neck.

- Positions of ease in lying – lying on your back with a pillow or rolled up towel under your knees.



- lying on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them, or with the top leg bent over the bottom one and rested on a pillow



Standing posture

- Imagine you have a string attached to your head, pulling upwards.
- Weight bear equally on both feet
- Knees relaxed
- Shoulders square, not rounded forward
- You should be aware of a small hollow in your low back.



Lifting

- Avoiding lifting heavy objects. If you have to lift keep the weight close to your body and bend your knees.



Other Advice

Avoid lying in the bath or reading in bed for any length of time as this can strain the neck and back

Change your position often

Wear comfy and supportive shoes. Avoid continuous use of high heels.

Do regular exercise

REMEMBER that your posture is not something that you can turn on and off, it is with you all the time. You need to work at improving it at all times and with all activities.