



Posture

How much do you really know about good posture? Answer the questions below... true or false?

1. The effects of poor posture can be far reaching, involving the respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems.
2. Many types of chairs actually encourage you to sit improperly.
3. If I exercise a lot, I don't need posture exercises.
4. Good posture is important because it helps your body function at its best.
5. Women's high-heeled shoes can contribute to poor posture.

(Answers below)

TRUE or FALSE?

1. **TRUE!** If not corrected, poor posture can affect your health and well-being. Poor posture contributes to shallow breathing, faulty digestion, and poor venous return, each of which affects not only the functions of individual organs, but also the entire body system.
2. **TRUE!** Many people work sitting in an office chair that is not properly fitted to their body and does not provide enough lower back support. Ergonomic office chairs or chairs with an adjustable back support can be used at work. Foot rests, portable lumbar back supports, or even a towel or small pillow can be used while sitting in an office chair, too.
3. **FALSE!** Regular exercises such as walking, swimming, or cycling will help the body stay aerobically conditioned, but specific strengthening exercises are important to help the muscles surrounding the back stay strong. There are also specific exercises that will help maintain good posture.
4. **TRUE!** When all your bodily systems are functioning at their best, then you will, too. Lack of energy and reduced coordination are just two of the many symptoms of poor posture and of a body that is not functioning efficiently.
5. **TRUE!** Avoid regularly wearing high-heeled shoes, which can affect the body's center of gravity and change the alignment of the entire body, negatively affecting back support and posture.

(Questions and answers taken from: www.amerchiro.org
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Posture is something we sometimes think of as aesthetic, but the true impact of the way we hold ourselves is much deeper. The way we stand or sit may give valuable insight as to our mood, confidence levels and may, rightly or wrongly, send out signals to others as to our personality traits.

The carriage of the head and torso for example, can suggest insecurity, if the head is hung low, or arrogance, if the head is held high, or a sense of self assurance if we open up the chest and relax the arms. In addition to body language signals, a slumping in the upper back and excessive rounding of the shoulders can actually close off the lungs and reduce the efficiency of the breathing. Over time this sort of 'kyphotic' posture can labour the breathing, which will increase the workload on the heart.

If we live sedentary lives, remaining seated for prolonged periods of time, then the muscles of the hips and back will eventually tighten, increasing tension in the neck and shoulders, and reducing muscular mobility. Long term, this can increase our risk of injury. In addition to this, the shortening in the torso can reduce the body's ability to properly digest our food, leaving us feeling sluggish, low on energy, and may cause bloating or other unpleasant side effects!

So posture is much more influential on the function of the body than perhaps first appears! Keep your body supple and your organs working efficiently with regular exercise, stretching and ergonomic seating when at work or home.

For more ideas of exercises to help strengthen your postural muscles, and stretches to keep you mobile speak to one of our personal trainers.