

Stand Taller for Posture Month

May is National Correct Posture Month, and it seems more was even right about standing up straight. From athletes like Soul Surfer Bethany Hamilton work with a postural alignment therapist to the thousands of people with back pain and muscle aches being helped by Certified Posture Exercise Professionals, strengthening posture is important. Improving your posture is not just about looking good. Studies show people with better posture really are healthier and actually live longer. From kids with backpacks or cane-carrying seniors--studies show poor posture is a major cause of back and neck pain for all ages, and over time often contributes to digestive and cardio-pulmonary problems.

Here's three things to help keep you standing tall. Take an a posture picture, do posture strengthening exercise and have smart posture habits.

1. Take an Annual posture picture to set the benchmark for YOUR body. Ask a friend to take your picture from the front, back and side.

Print them out, one to a sheet, and look at your body symmetry. Just comparing posture pictures from year to year can be eye-opening. You can assess your alignment by putting a dot between your feet on the front and back view, and at your ankle on the side view. Then, fold each paper in half neatly at the dot.

FRONT & BACK VIEW: The two halves of your body should be the same. If your head and/or torso is off to one side, or your arms are hanging differently, your posture is not symmetrical.

SIDE VIEW: The line from your ankle should pass thru your shoulder and ear. If your head is way forward of that

line, you may have a posture distortion called Forward Head Posture (FHP). File your posture picture and compare it to a new one next year.

2. Do Posture Strengthening Exercises to maximize the benefit of any workout, or as a beginning exercise to get in shape.

Yoga, Tai-Chi and Pilates are all great for building body awareness and control, along with the new StrongPosture™ exercise programs from Dr.

Steven Weiniger, author of the book *Stand Taller-Live Longer, An Anti-Aging Strategy: 10 Minutes a Day to Keep Your Body Active and Pain-Free*.

The first StrongPosture exercises Dr. Weiniger recommends are the Stork for strengthening balance and WallStand to strengthen alignment.

Best Posture STORK:

Train yourself to stand tall while building good posture by balancing on

one foot. First, stand tall with your best posture, and then focus on staying tall and straight as you lift your thigh so your knee is at hip height. Keep stand-

ing tall for 30 seconds on each side, focusing on keeping your body well aligned.

Vertical WALLSTAND: Back up to a wall so your heels, buttocks, shoulders and head all lightly touch the wall while you keep everything level, relaxed and aligned-- and take 3 slow breaths, feeling your body's best posture. Note: If you feel any areas of stress, get your posture checked by a professional.

3. Choose Smart Posture Habits

Get a good chair, and change it's position during the day. If you're going to play videogames, exercise more than your thumbs with games with one that makes you move such as the the motion sensing Nintendo Wii or Xbox Kinect. Invest in quality shoes, and



consider using a shoe insert or orthotic, especially if you've had foot problems. If you have back pain, neck soreness, or other posture problem--- or want to find out how strengthening your posture can improve sports performance (ie golf, tennis, baseball) and wellness-- help is available. Consult a Certified Posture Exercise Professional or other chiropractor, PT or massage therapists trained to analyze posture pictures and teach individualized posture exercise routines for pain management and wellness.

Your posture is how the world sees you, and a bit of effort at strengthening your posture is an anti-aging habit to make you look and feel better, avoid injury and exercise effectively to stay active and age well.

Dr. Steven Weiniger, internationally recognized expert on posture and anti-aging, is author of *Stand Taller-Live Longer*. He is also senior editor of *BodyZone.com*, and online wellness resource which offers a national directory for C.P.E.P.s (Certified Posture Exercise Professional) and other posture professionals. 📧



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