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Postural Health



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"When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control the way you are responding to what's happening. That's where the power is."

- Anonymous

the major PLAYERS OF POSTURE

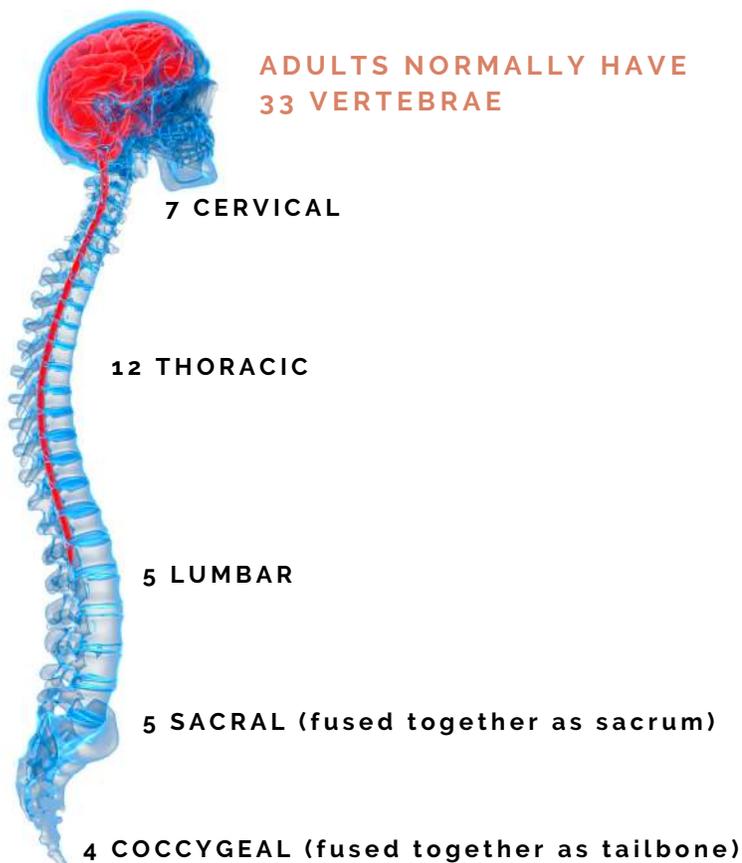
AN OVERVIEW OF THE VERTEBRAL COLUMN, SURROUNDING LIGAMENTS & CORE MUSCLES

THE SPINE IS OUR BODY'S CENTRAL SUPPORT STRUCTURE

It **helps keep us upright** and **connects the different parts of our skeleton to each other**: our head, chest, pelvis, shoulders, arms and legs. Although the spine is made up of a chain of bones, it is flexible due to elastic ligaments and spinal disks. Your spine has many functions: it carries the weight of your head, torso and arms, and allows your body to move in every direction. Some sections of the spine are more flexible than others. The most flexible part is the cervical spine (neck area). The lower down the vertebrae are in the spine, the more weight they have to carry.

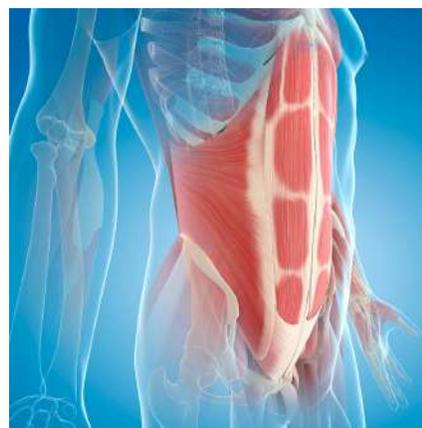
The system of ligaments in the vertebral column, combined with the tendons and muscles, provides a natural brace to help protect the spine from injury. Ligaments aid in joint stability during rest and movement and help prevent injury from hyperextension and hyperflexion (excessive movements).

Over many years our spine starts to wear, meaning that as we age our spinal disks become thinner, the vertebrae become compressed and the spine curves more.



IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A STRONG CORE

The best way to improve your posture is to **focus on exercises that strengthen** your core -- the **abdominal and low back muscles** that connect to your spine and pelvis. Some of these muscles move your torso by flexing, extending, or rotating your spine. Others stabilize your pelvis and spine in a natural, neutral position.



remaining NEUTRAL

WHY IS A NEUTRAL BODY POSITION IMPORANT?

A neutral position is central to body mechanics and allows the muscle forces throughout the body to be balanced so that the body functions in the most efficient manner.

- Position of ease for the body to maintain for a prolonged period of time & with minimal effort
- Supports the natural curves of the spine and maintains body in good alignment
- Position that gives your body biomechanical advantages to do your work
- Position where the stress on the musculoskeletal system is reduced

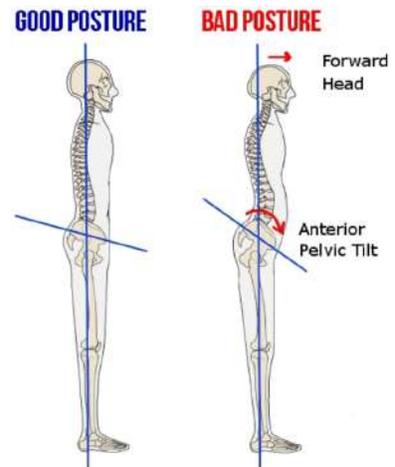
When people use their bodies in positions that deviate from the neutral position, their muscles and tendons must generate much higher forces to accomplish a task than when they work in a neutral posture.

EXAMPLE: When a person carries an object which his/her arms outstretched, significantly more shoulder and low-back effort is necessary to carry the load than if the load is carried close to one's side.

WHAT DOES NEUTRAL POSITION LOOK LIKE?

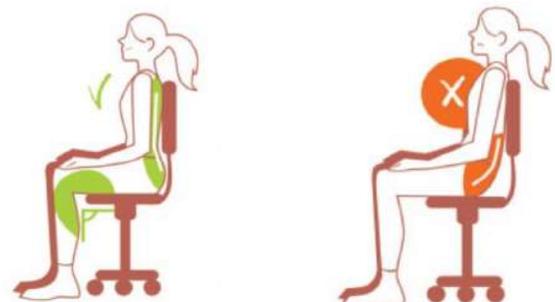
STANDING

Head is upright, shoulders and arms relaxed at one's sides, forearm in neutral position, wrists strait, back straight (maintaining natural curves), hips extended, and knees slightly flexed. The ears, neck, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles should be approximately aligned from a lateral (side) view and the three back curves maintained.



SITTING

Similar to the standing position in the upper extremity, however, elbows flexed at 90 degrees, fingers slightly curled and relaxed. Hips should be flexed to 100 degrees, knees at 90 degrees, and the feet flat on the floor or a supporting surface such as a footrest.



the basics of BODY MECHANICS

WHAT IS IT?

Body Mechanics is defined as proper use of the body during daily activities in order to preserve a balance of musculature and minimize strain on body structures.

The focus of body mechanics is to prevent injuries and preserve the back during lifting activities and prolonged posturing, such as standing or sitting for long periods of time.

Whether you are an office worker or a laborer, proper body mechanics is essential to preventing injuries.

PRINCIPLES OF BODY MECHANICS

WHEN MOVING EQUIPMENT

- Keep the load close to the body
- Move with the feet first
- Squat instead of bending forward. Avoid twisting at the waist - turn your whole body. Your feet should point toward what you're lifting
- Use a wide-base of support and staggered stance

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

All humans move in and out of awkward postures for a short period of time to complete chores, work, and leisure activities. However, when awkward positions are maintained over a prolonged period of time, and when combined with excessive force and repetition, the risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder significantly increases.



RISK FACTORS FOR MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

MSDs develop from the cumulative effects of risk factors over a period of months or years.

These include:

- Working in awkward positions
- Using faulty body mechanics
- Using forceful exertions (to lift, push, pull or grip)
- Performing repetitive work
- Experiencing stressful work conditions



Risks for low back pain relate to lack of flexibility (particularly in the back and legs), a previous history of pain, standing for long periods of time, and an overall lack of physical conditioning.

The greater the number of risk factors present, the higher the risk for musculoskeletal problems.

everyday ERGONOMICS

WHAT IS IT?

Ergonomics incorporates principles of body mechanics and design in work and home environments. It addresses the relationship between the work and the worker and promotes productivity while preventing injuries.

ERGONOMICS IN THE OFFICE

Effective use and comfort at a computer workstation depends on the proper configuration of all components (chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse, work surface, light, phone, document holder, wrist rest) in relation to the person using the computer.



COMPUTER WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS

PROPER POSTURE

- Eyes gaze slightly downward
- Head & neck upright
- Shoulders relaxed at one's side
- Elbows bent to about 90-100 degrees
- Hips flexed to 100 - 110 degrees
- Feet flat on floor or footrest
- Wrists straight

ADJUST KEYBOARD

- Home row at elbow height
- Keyboard with negative tilt
- Mouse close to keyboard

MONITOR

- Face monitor directly
- Top of screen at eye level
- Place an arm's length away
- Sharpen contrast

CHAIR

- Adjust height up or down
 - Adjust back support
 - Adjust seat angle
- *Chair height should be adjusted so that elbows are level with the work surface or slightly higher

LIGHTING

- Avoid reflections
- Tilt screen to avoid glare
- Place monitor perpendicular to window
- Use task lighting

***See next page for picture of an ergonomically designed workstation**

everyday ERGONOMICS

CORRECT SITTING POSTURE



CONSIDER THIS WHEN CHOOSING AN ERGONOMIC CHAIR

- Chair Height:** The chair height should be adjusted so that the elbows are level with the work surface or slightly higher
- Seat Angle:** A person should be fully seated on the chair with the hips flexed to 100-110 degrees.
- Seat Pan:** The seat pan should be wide enough and adjustable to support the thighs without touching the backs of the knees.
- Back Rest:** The backrest should support both the lumbar curve and thoracic region.
- Footrests:** Feet need to be resting on the floor or on footrests to relieve pressure on the thighs and lower back.



SEVEN *body rules* FOR SWEATING SAFELY



This section outlines basic concepts to keep in mind when performing exercises.

RULE 1: FIRST DO NO HARM

Exercise is meant to make you feel better and improve your mind and body. The purpose of exercise is not to create injury or pain. Therefore, train without pain.

RULE 2: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Take your time figuring out which movements are best for your body. For example, some people might not be able to squat deeply due to their hip joint structure and soft-tissue limitations. You might need a wide squat stance while your workout partner does better with a narrow squat stance. Learn the natural patterns of your body.

RULE 3: RESPECT PAIN & ITS SYMPTOMS

Be mindful of your body's signals. If an exercise hurts, modify it to a pain-free motion or skip it. Take charge of your pain by knowing which movements create discomfort and modifying activities and motions as necessary. Also, avoid movements and exercises that cause burning, tingling, numbness, and shooting or radiating pain.

RULE 4: TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Mentally practicing a task or skill before doing the movement or exercise might help your body perform better. However, mentally practicing a skill is incomplete without performing the physical action as well.

RULE 5: FOCUS ON FORM

Train with good form and body awareness to build and maintain good posture. Train with good form and think about your movement patterns so you imprint these into your brain.

RULE 5: SPARE YOUR SPINE

Stiffen your core muscles only enough for the task at hand. Go slow and learn the limitations of your body. Also, protect your spine during exercise by maintaining the normal spine curves.

RULE 6: RECOVER & RECUPERATE

Rest and recover thoroughly after workouts. Stay clear of training approaches that constantly push you and tear you down without respecting pain, recovery, and meaningful progress. Also, periodically take time off from training to allow your body to fully recuperate from repetitive movements. This includes getting enough sleep each night. Even a good thing like exercise can be done in excess, so breaks are needed.

RULE 7: TRAIN WITH VARIETY

Rest and recover thoroughly after workouts. Stay clear of training approaches that constantly push you and tear you down without respecting pain, recovery, and meaningful progress. Also, periodically take time off from training to allow your body to fully recuperate from repetitive movements. This includes getting enough sleep each night. Even a good thing like exercise can be done in excess, so breaks are needed.

BRAIN POWER

returning to work DURING COVID - 19

Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work.

Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other strong emotions can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to burnout. How you cope with these emotions and stress can affect your well-being, the well-being of the people you care about, your workplace, and your community. During this pandemic, **it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help.**

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF STRESS YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING:

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

KNOW THE COMMON WORK RELATED FACTORS THAT CAN ADD TO STRESS DURING A PANDEMIC:

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job
- Feelings that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule

BRAIN POWER

returning to work DURING COVID - 19

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE & MANAGE JOB STRESS

- **Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).**
 - Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
 - Talk openly with employers, employees, and unions about how the pandemic is affecting work. Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
 - Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- **Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.**
- **Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.**
 - Keep a regular sleep schedule
 - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
 - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
 - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
 - Practice mindfulness techniques
 - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
- **Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.**
- **Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.**
- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/mental-health-non-healthcare.html>

NOURISH

MEDITERRANEAN CHICKPEA SALAD

Recipe From: Misfits Market



ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups chickpeas
- 1/2 lemon
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 medium seedless cucumbers
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- 2 small sprigs mint
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup feta cheese (optional)
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

recipe preparation

- 1. Drain and rinse chickpeas.
- 2. In a medium bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, and juice of half a lemon. Set aside.
- 3. Slice cucumbers into 1/2-inch thick disks. Cut a red onion in half and slice into 1/4-inch thick slices. Pull mint leaves from the sprigs.
- 4. Transfer vegetables to the bowl with the oil, vinegar, and juice mixture and toss gently to coat. Add optional feta cheese and red pepper flakes.
- 5. Season with salt and pepper, serve, and enjoy!