

## BACK FACTS: Posture

Good posture contributes to increased energy, better breathing, improved circulation and can even make you look better. People with proper posture seem to move with greater confidence and grace than those who slouch. Good posture will also make you look taller and slimmer, and when our bodies are aligned, it contributes to good health.

The secret to good posture is understanding and maintaining the balance among the spine's four natural curves - two forward curves (neck and lower back), and two backward curves (middle back and base of the spine). The curves of the spine give it resilience and absorb impact. If the curves are too flat, our ligaments and muscles have to take the extra load and this may result in strain and pain. If the curves are too accentuated, our spine cannot distribute the body's weight effectively. Either way, movement becomes more difficult, draining our energy.



### Tips for Standing Tall

1. When standing, your head, shoulders, hips and ankles should line-up, one comfortably above the other. Your knees should be slightly bent and your feet should be shoulder-width apart or more.
2. Most of us have a variety of bad habits that get in the way of good posture such as carrying a heavy bag or purse on one shoulder, cradling the phone between the shoulder and ear, and falling asleep on the sofa with your head on the armrest. Any of these activities may give you a stiff neck and also distort those important spinal curves.
3. If you must use a bag or briefcase with a single strap, make sure the strap is padded and wide. Try to choose a strap that is long enough to place over the head to rest on the side opposite the bag or briefcase. This can help to distribute the weight more evenly.
4. High heels also throw the spine out of alignment making good posture difficult and often leading to lower back pain. A low, sturdy, comfortable shoe is best, but if you are devoted to your high fashion footwear, try to restrict the height to no more than two inches.
5. Good posture is just as important when you are sitting as when you are standing. When sitting at work for a prolonged period of time, position your lower back against the back of the chair to obtain the greatest amount of support for your spine. A roll can also be used for added support. Avoid leaning your backrest too far backwards and adjust the height of the chair so that your knees are flexed at approximately a 90 degree angle when your feet are flat on the floor.

6. Most importantly, try not to sit in any one position for a long period of time. Take a quick stretch break or change positions every 30-45min. For a quick and easy stretch, stand up and raise your arms above your head.
7. Exercise can help prevent injury. Regular exercise such as running, walking, swimming, or bicycling will help the body stay aerobically conditioned. Specific strengthening exercises for the back and abdominal or core area will help promote good posture, which will, in turn, further help to condition muscles and prevent injury.

### **Canada's chiropractors – here to help**

Chiropractors can help you prevent slouching by assessing your posture and providing corrective therapy. Should you suffer from sore muscles, or a neck or back ache, a chiropractor can also provide treatment for your pain.

**Fact:** 80 per cent of Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetime. If required, a chiropractor can treat your pain through a variety of methods. These can include: spinal and joint adjustment, modalities such as ultrasound or TENS, soft tissue therapy and therapeutic exercises.

For more information or to locate a chiropractor near you, please visit the Canadian Chiropractic Association website [www.chiropracticcanada.ca](http://www.chiropracticcanada.ca).

**Be your all by standing tall.**



**The Canadian Chiropractic Association**

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