

A close-up photograph of a person's foot wearing a bright orange sneaker with a white sole, standing on a blue metal staircase. The person is wearing black socks. The background shows the blue metal railings and steps of the staircase, which are slightly out of focus. A dark blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

4 Steps to a Better Posture

Dr Jan Jones - Chiropractor

About the Author



My name is Dr Jan Jones, Chiropractor.

I am passionate about helping people to live a healthier and happier life.

If your body is not functioning like it should, it will prevent you from living out your purpose and do what you want to do.

This is why I do what I do.

As a Chiropractor, I help people's bodies function better. As a coach I teach people and guide them how to live healthier lives. As a speaker or presenter I get the word out and change people's mindset on health and toxins.

I believe that everyone deserves personalised care:

- you may want specific care for yourself
- a parent wanting the best for your kids
- a sportsperson looking for an edge
- an employer wanting the best for your staff.

My approach is patient-centered and designed around your health and well-being goals.

With over 15 years of clinical experience in various clinical settings you are in safe hands.

Enjoy the e-book.

Introduction

Sit up straight, walk upright.

Sound simple and easy doesn't it?

Thing is that very often we have practised a wrong posture over and over and over.... and it became a habit and behaviour.

Posture can be seen as a behaviour and a behaviour can be changed.

Every time we practise something our brain forms new neural connections and the more we practise the more ingrained that behaviour becomes.

So a big part of correcting a person's posture is to change their behavior.

Posture is also structural and sometimes the structure of your spine can affect your posture.

Your body and spine had to adapt to years or even decades of bad behaviour, slips, bumps, falls and accidents. Often your body needs help to be corrected. This is where chiropractic can help.

There are times that the damage is so extensive that improvement is limited.

Step 1 – How do you measure up?

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My patients routinely have a postural assessment done the first time I see them. Any big concerns are usually pointed out. Most people are on their “best behaviour” in the office and it is your friends and family that see your true posture more readily.

One way of checking your posture is by looking in the mirror. However if you are serious, get a friend or family member take photos for you. One from the front and one from the side.

From the front –

Stand feet about shoulder width and relax. To get a more natural posture march on the spot for three or four steps. Then take the photo.

From the side –

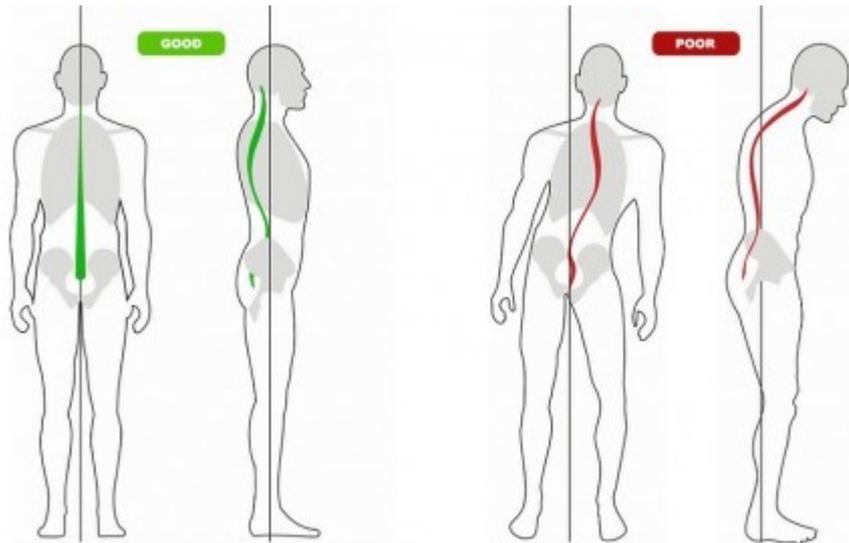
Same as for the front. The big emphasis is to relax.

Many of us think by pulling our shoulders back sorts out our posture. WRONG..... what it does do is cause our head to move forward causing other issues. Plus it gets uncomfortable and honestly, how long can you really keep it up?

To practise a good posture you need to know what a good posture looks and feels like.

Let's go through some basics of where your posture should be.

Step 1



From the front:

From the front the spine should be a straight line. Check if all seven points are met.

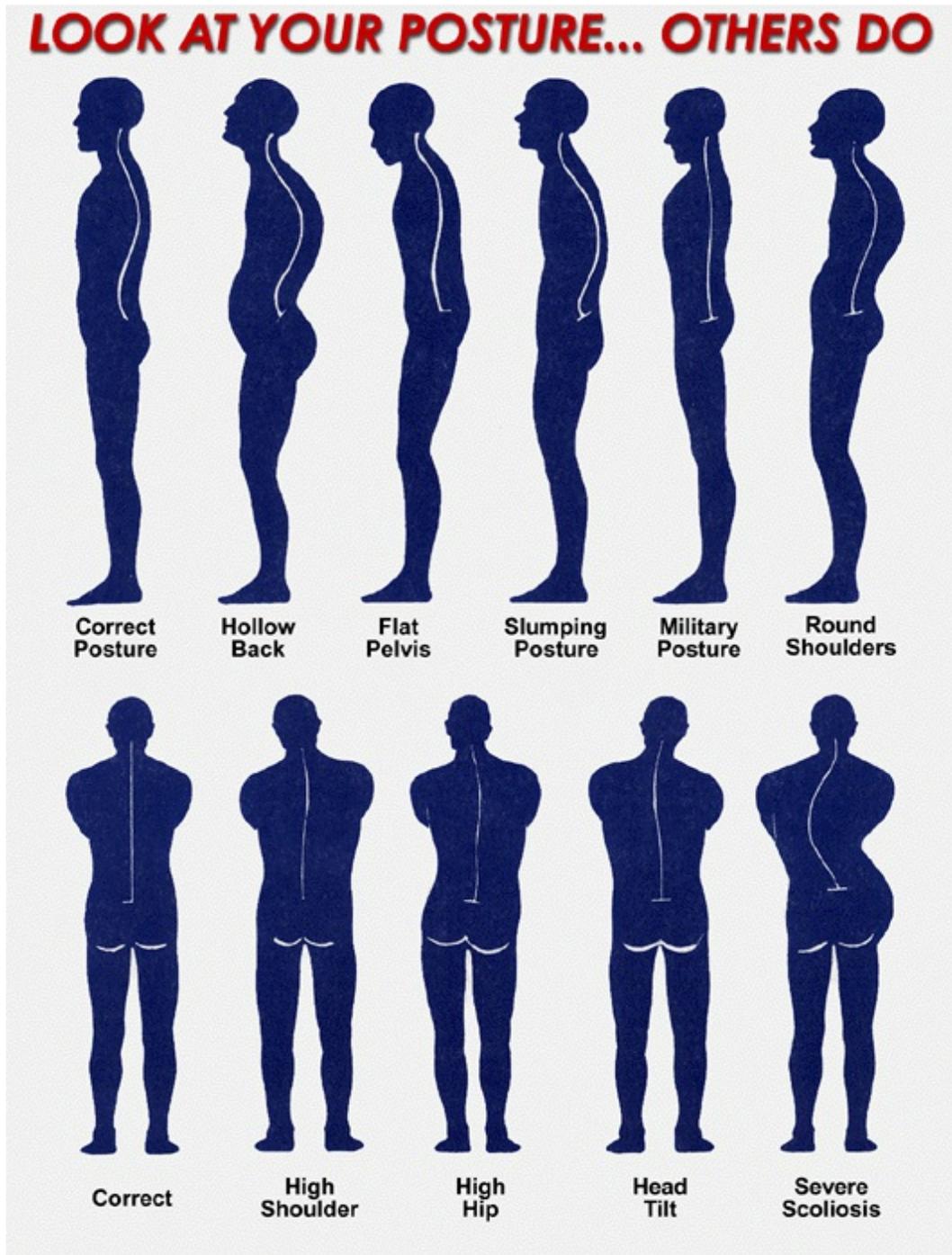
1. Eyes level
2. Shoulders level
3. Hips level
4. Knees level
5. Feet symmetrical
6. Shoulders lining up with the hips
7. Nose lining up with the belly button

From the side:

If you draw a straight line from the ear it should line up with your shoulders, hip joint, knee and ankle.

Step 1

Have a look at the different types of postures we see. Where do you fit in?



Step 2 - Getting you upright.

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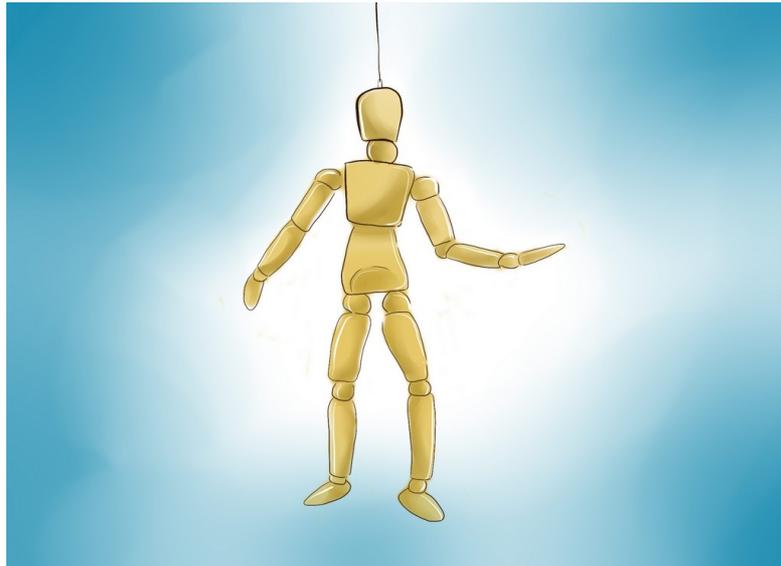
The two exercises in Step 2 will help you feel what is normal.

This helps to retrain your brain where your posture should be.

When we get rid of a bad habit it is good to replace it with a good habit.
Exercise 1 is that good habit.

Let's start with two very simple exercises.

Step 2



Exercise 1: The String

Imagine a string connected to the top of your head.

Feel this string pull you straight up, keep your shoulders and body relaxed. If you feel stress or tension or pain, chances are you are over doing it.

You can use this while sitting or standing at any time as a check for where your posture is and to replace that bad posture habit with a good posture habit.

One BIG thing here – a lot of us were taught as children to pull our shoulders back – NO! STOP! – keep the shoulders relaxed. Why? If you look in the mirror you will see as soon as you pull your shoulders back your chin pops forward.

Do this as many times a day as you like.

1. Let the “string” pull you up and straighten your spine.
2. Relax the shoulders
3. Use Exercise 2 as a reference of where you should be

Step 2

Exercise 2: Wall standing



This simple exercise does a number of things.

It helps you find neutral and helps to retrain the brain of where your posture should be. At the same time it stretches and strengthens various muscles for a good posture.

Very often this position is uncomfortable due to shortened muscles.

Simply stand against the wall doing the following:

1. Heels touching the wall
2. Buttocks touching the wall
3. Shoulders relaxed and upper back touching the wall
4. Head touching the wall – to do this pull the head straight back, don't tilt it back.

There should be a small gap between the lower back and the wall, about the width of your hand.

Start by doing this daily for 30 seconds at a time.

It is not unusual to feel muscles pulling and contracting, it usually feels awkward in the beginning. If it is painful, stop.

Step 3 - Correcting your posture

Step 3 – Exercises to help correct your posture

The exercises in Step 3 will help you correct your posture that won't simply improve by standing upright. It helps you fine tune and correct your posture even further.

Exercise 3 – Restoring your centre of gravity –

Most people tend to “hang on their toes”. When you look at a person from the side, their ankles do not line up with their knees or hips from the side.

From the back, the ankle should be in a neutral position.

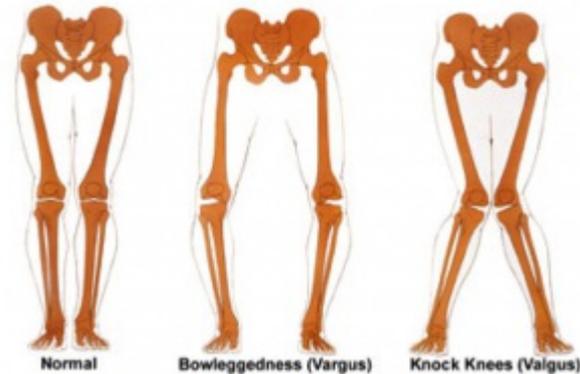
To correct the center of gravity in the foot do the following:

1. Make sure your ankle in in the neutral position

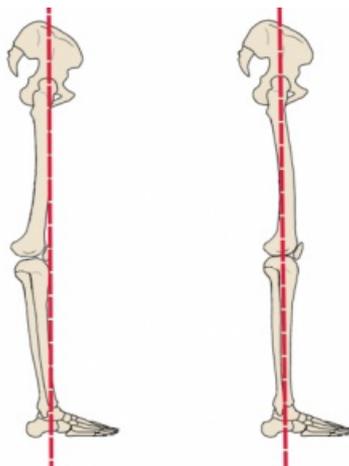


Step 3

2. Make sure your knees are in neutral as well



3. Make sure your knees are not locked.



4. Shift your weight on your feet till you feel your weight balancing over the ankle joint.

5. Gently tighten the stomach muscles and apply Exercise 1, The String, on top of this.

6. Remember to relax the shoulders.

If all went well, your posture should look good from the side now.

Step 3



Exercise 4 – Restoring the natural curve in the spine

This exercise will help restore the natural curves your spine should have from the side.

Very often injuries – especially whiplash – can alter the shape of your spine. X-rays are the most effective way to see this change, however if your ear does not line up with the shoulder, chances are you have lost this curve.

There is some interesting looking equipment on the web that can cost a small fortune, however, a pool noodle or firmly rolled towel can do the same job. I find the pool noodle firmer and more consistent than a rolled towel.

Best time to do this is either first thing in the morning or last thing at night for 5min.

The effectiveness of this exercise is limited depending on the condition of your spine.

Important – If you find any of these causing pain or very uncomfortable, then stop. You may have something underlying that needs to be checked out.

Step 3

How to do this:

1. Get a pool noodle – cut into 2 pieces, about 30-40cm each (enough so it sticks out about 5cm each side).
2. Place the neck one in the centre of the neck like in the picture – the centre of your neck should be at your hair line in the back.
3. For the lower back place it just above the pelvic bones, in line with your belly button.
4. Bend your knees and lie for 5 min.



Advanced exercises – Mirror Image Exercises

When looking at your posture, you may notice that you are not quite lined up and you may have curves looking at the front of the spine, the neck being too far forward or even your hips rotated one way and your shoulders the other. Even your shoulders not aligned with the hips.



There are over 40 different exercises. The image shows one example of some of the exercises.

I would not recommend you try these unless prescribed to you by a Chiropractor. By viewing a combination of x-rays and posture scans these exercises are then worked out.

I would recommend doing Exercise 1 and Exercise 2 for about 2 weeks before moving onto the exercises in step 3.

Step 4 – Taking it further

Taking it Further

The exercises in this e-book should make a big difference in your posture and can easily be done at home.

For structural issues and more specific correction, you may need to take it further.

If you are in the Carindale and surrounding areas in Brisbane, why not make an appointment to see me.

I use digital postural assessment tools for those interested and if need be can send you for full spine postural x-rays.

Easy on-line booking at <http://silkyoakchiropractic.com.au>

Feel free to pass this e-book around and help me help others live a healthier and happier life.

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