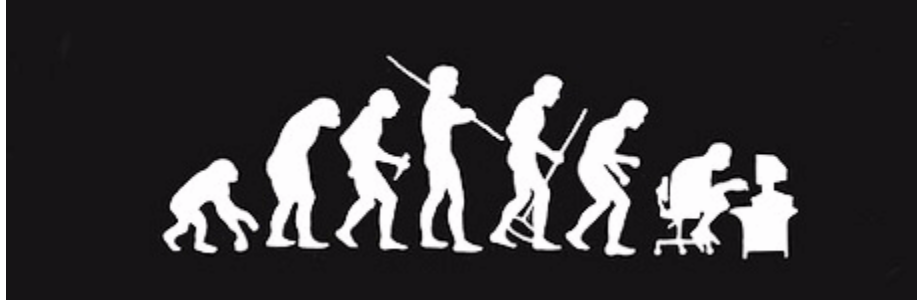


# Don't Break Your Back! Tips to Healthy Posture

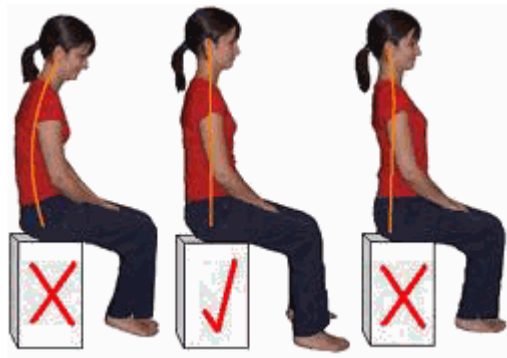
Customized from: <http://thinksimplenow.com/health/dont-break-your-back-tips-to-healthy-posture/>



**Poor posture can cause pain in the back and neck, and eventually causes injury. Improving your posture is a great way to improve your image while at the same time improving your health.**

First, let's go over some of the things that contribute to poor posture. Most of them are fixable, and others (like pregnancy) eventually go away on their own.

- **Poor habits** - sitting and standing incorrectly



Source: [http://www.fitness-programs-for-life.com/good\\_posture.html](http://www.fitness-programs-for-life.com/good_posture.html)

**Slouched v. Poised v. Forced sitting**

Source: [http://farm1.static.flickr.com/110/272571491\\_0620af3289.jpg](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/110/272571491_0620af3289.jpg)

- Weakened muscles
- Obesity - The extra weight strains the muscles
- Pregnancy
- Improper shoes - high heeled shoes are the worst
- Reduced muscle and joint flexibility

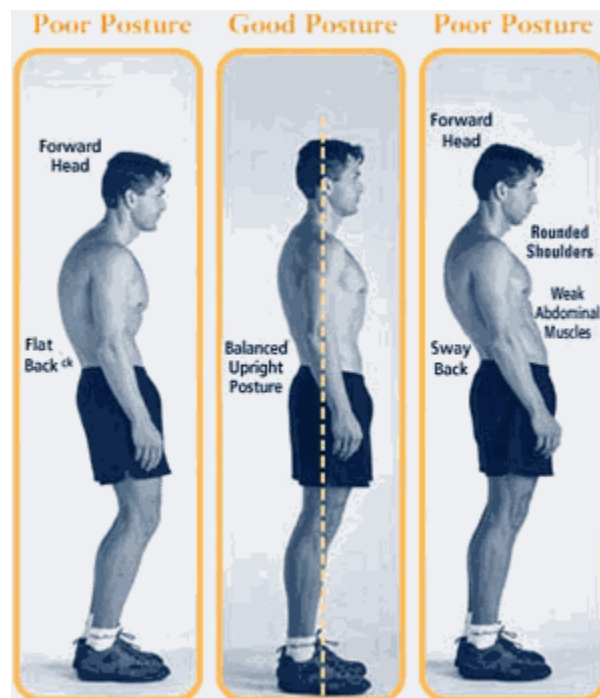
## Benefits of Good Posture

Standing and sitting correctly prevents strain and overuse, and helps **prevent** back, neck, and muscle **pain**. Good posture also helps the muscles work more efficiently, which helps **prevent fatigue**. Most importantly, I have found that I can breathe deeply from my belly (my core). The energy I get from a deep breath is what keeps me going during the day.

The physical benefits are many, but there are other side benefits to good posture. When you stand properly, the body looks aligned, looks slimmer, and generally looks better. Good posture can also help **you feel more confident** - because you look and feel better, your confidence increases.

Most of us work at a desk or on a computer, and it's very easy to slip into poor sitting habits. If your body posture is not aligned, eventually you will experience pain. Make sure you follow proper **techniques for sitting, standing, and lifting**. These seem obvious, but let's list them to reflect.

- **Sitting** - Sit with your shoulders back and back straight. Your legs should be at a 90 degree angle to your body. Keep your neck, back, and heels in alignment. Avoid the urge to slouch at your desk!
- **Standing** - When standing, hold your head up straight and chin slightly tucked in. Keep your shoulder blades back, chest forward, and stomach tucked in. Keep most of your weight on the balls of the feet and not the heels or toes. Your arms should hang down naturally.



- **Lifting** - Lifting something off the ground by bending over forces your back to do most of the lifting and puts a strain on the lower back. The proper way to lift is to bend at the knees and not the waist. This forces your leg muscles to do most of the work.
- **Keep Your Spine Straight:** In general, try to keep your spine as straight as possible at all times. No matter what you're doing, if you're conscious of the alignment of your back and neck, you will notice that your posture will improve.

## Simple Stretches to Loosen Your Back Muscles

- **Lower back cat stretch:** This stretch is done on all fours, fingers facing forward. Start by dropping your head and raising your back as you push the shoulder blades upward. Repeat in the opposite direction by pushing your chest downward, arching your lower back.



- **Knees to chest:** While lying on your back, pull both knees to the chest with your hands behind your knees. Keep your tailbone on the floor and hold this stretch for at least 15 seconds.
- **Shoulder blade squeeze:** Have arms straight out in front of you at shoulder height. Now swing both arms horizontally towards your back, like you are trying to reconnect your fingers behind your back. Swing your arms back to the front. Do this motion slowly several times.



- The Core Twist: Hold arms out, bent at shoulder height. Feet planted on the ground, toes facing forward. Keeping your hips facing forward, twist your upper body towards the back (try to look behind you). Twist from side to side. Twist baby! Twist!

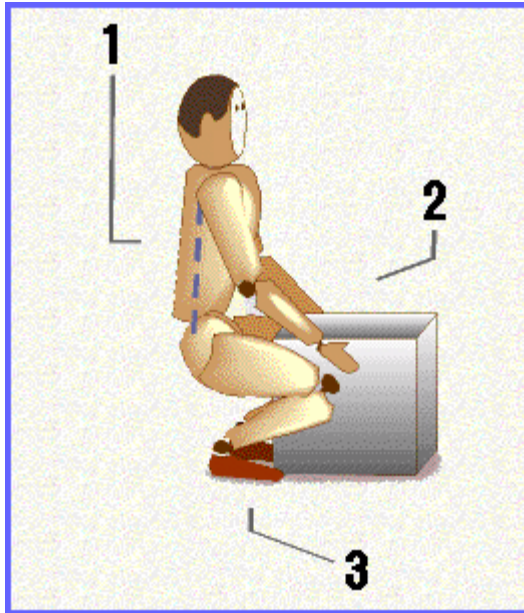
**Are these techniques to carry weights right or wrong?**



**Backpack Slung on One Shoulder**

Source: [http://walking.about.com/od/backtoschool/ss/wearbackpack\\_2.htm](http://walking.about.com/od/backtoschool/ss/wearbackpack_2.htm)

**Right or Wrong?**



Source: [http://grupos.emagister.com/imagen/postura\\_correcta/1126-168487](http://grupos.emagister.com/imagen/postura_correcta/1126-168487)

Right or Wrong?



<http://www.thepickards.co.uk/images/pirate63.gif>

I'll tell you the next clue:

How do you calculate the target heart rate?

Sources:

<http://thinksimplenow.com/health/dont-break-your-back-tips-to-healthy-posture/>

[http://www.google.es/imgres?imgurl=http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/reports/images/screen\\_guide/fun10.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/reports/display\\_screen\\_guide2.htm&usq=u6RF2kCR55p8brGnU8bCd042nBE=&h=150&w=103&sz=2&hl=es&start=18&itbs=1&tbnid=UJ\\_1w9nJgSb8sM:&tbnh=96&tbnw=66&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dshoulder%2Bblade%2Bsqueeze%26hl%3Des%26tbs%3Disch:1](http://www.google.es/imgres?imgurl=http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/reports/images/screen_guide/fun10.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/reports/display_screen_guide2.htm&usq=u6RF2kCR55p8brGnU8bCd042nBE=&h=150&w=103&sz=2&hl=es&start=18&itbs=1&tbnid=UJ_1w9nJgSb8sM:&tbnh=96&tbnw=66&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dshoulder%2Bblade%2Bsqueeze%26hl%3Des%26tbs%3Disch:1)

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