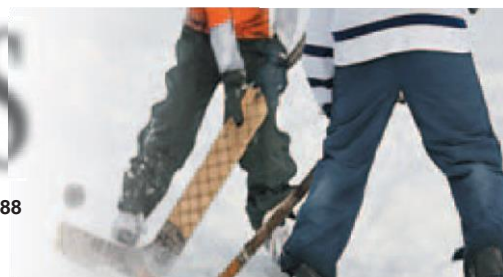


SPORTS

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Posture pointers can help

“Be tall and proud like Ed.”

At a dominating five foot four inches tall this comment often leads to the “is this guy serious?” look from clients. After the awkward laughter subsides we talk about how vertically-challenged individuals tend to have excellent posture trying to gain every millimetre we can.

Of all the things you can do for your overall well-being, improving posture is one of the most important.

Life is slowly sucking us back into the fetal position. Cell phones, computers, reading, sitting at a desk, driving a car: Most activities of daily living encourage us to round the neck and shoulders forward. Modern society has embraced this position as “normal” and often views tall upright posture as cocky and arrogant.

Adolescent girls will round forward to hide new development in the chest as few at that age are keen to stand out. Teenage boys do exercises to strengthen all the muscles on the front of their bodies (mirror muscles) which further pulls the shoulders forward. Sadly it requires less energy to hang off the ligaments in this new normal position than it does to engage the postural muscles to pull you upright. Throw all these tendencies into the mix and add the fact that the body operates in a use it or you lose it reality and voila Harry Hunchback and Helen Head-down are everywhere!

These positions are poison for your entire upper torso. Waking up with numb hands, carpal tunnel syndrome, elbow issues, thoracic outlet syndrome, frozen shoulder, rotator cuff tears, impingement syndrome, bursitis, tendonitis, neck-aches, headaches, even reduced lung capacity all have a direct correlation to the posture we choose to use.

Good posture on the other hand places the joints in their best fit position, allowing efficient, powerful movements through a full range of motion; The right muscles switch on in the right order, with the least wear and tear on the joint structures.

Doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractors, massage and trainer types alike are asked multiple times every day to provide relief, exercises, stretches, and fascial release movements to cure the symptoms of Harry and Helen’s postural tendencies. While we can often provide band-aids and temporary help, the power for long-term relief lies with the individual.

Go ahead, round those shoulders, drop that bowling ball, cranium forward and try to take a deep breath, then try to reach your arms overhead. Doesn’t seem natural does it? Now take a deep breath as you lift your chest and draw the head back so the ears align over the shoulders. Keeping the shoulders in that position reach overhead. You’re instantly taller, breathing deeper and can finally slam dunk that basketball.

Changing one’s postural habits is not easy! We all need reminders throughout the day, in the car, on the phone, at the desk, carrying the laundry basket. Commitment to better posture will have a significant impact on your health, it will even make you taller.



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