



SLOUCHING LEADS TO “OUCHING”

How Physical Therapy Can Help Your Posture

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How Physical Therapy Can Help Your Posture

Do you catch yourself slouching throughout the day? Do you notice your spine gets sore those last couple hours of the school or workday? If you are experiencing aches and pains, especially in your neck or back, your poor posture may be to blame.

Most of us spend our day staring at a computer screen, riding in our car, or looking down at our phones. These slouched postures with our heads tilted forward or looking down cause stress to the muscles and joints of the neck and back.

The worse your posture is, the more intense your back and neck pain can become. Fortunately, your posture can improve with the help of physical therapy.

What Are the Natural Curves of Your Spine?

Our spines are made up of four natural curves: the cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and sacral. When the spine is in its natural position, the vertebrae stack up over one another, and we call this “good posture” or sometimes “neutral spine.”

These natural curves, along with the intervertebral discs, absorb and distribute stresses from everyday activities such as sitting, standing, walking, or more intense activities such as running and jumping.

When you slouch, the spine in your neck and lower back becomes straighter, while the upper back becomes excessively

rounded. This produces a forward-head posture, humped upper back and flattened lower back.

Ideally, our postures will change depending on our activities. Unfortunately, we often sink into poor postural habits and lose the natural stacked position our spines were designed to have.

What Are the Most Common Problems with Bad Posture?

Very few people have perfect posture. We become so wrapped up in whatever tasks we are doing that we forget to think about how we are holding our bodies. Most people ignore their posture until they begin to notice aches and pains.

Improper posture isn't due to laziness but is generally due to bad habits, or at times, a physical weakness within our bodies. We slouch and slump when we get distracted or due to the design of our comfy couches and chairs. Poor posture leads to excessive strain on your joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

Over time the sustained postures will affect the muscles needed to keep you upright and functioning at your best. Your body is designed to align perfectly to allow for proper movement of your muscles joints. When your spine is not stacked in the natural posture, it can affect breathing, digestion, and blood circulation.

If poor posture continues, it often leads to chronic conditions like back and neck pain. Poor postural habits can also affect your

HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE



shoulders, especially reaching overhead. In more severe cases, the slouched posture can affect how you walk and negatively affect your balance.

What to Expect in Physical Therapy

Our physical therapists are experts in evaluating posture and movement. By pinpointing the source of your aches and pains, we can develop a plan for you that will return you to an ideal posture and quickly relieve your pain. Here are a few steps you can take to have an immediate impact:

- **Limit how long you sit.** Prolonged sitting is not suitable for your back or your overall health. Although adjusting your posture while sitting can be helpful, a more practical option is to stand up periodically throughout the day. Limit your sitting to 30-45 minutes at a time.
- **Find your natural posture.** The spine does not like to remain in any one position for extended times. By finding your natural posture, you can counteract the slouching you do throughout the day. Start by lifting your breast bone (i.e., sternum) towards the sky. This will naturally cause your spine to straighten out which will lift you into your natural posture.
- **Start strength training.** Your body has hundreds of muscles. These muscles protect and control your spine. By lifting weights, running, and swimming, you can keep them strong. Train the muscles of your hips, pelvis, and spine — your core muscles — to help your posture.

Physical therapists are movement experts, and they are great resources to have when trying to achieve your physical performance goals. They will aid you in improving your balance, stability, flexibility, and mobility, all of which will positively affect your posture.

Contact Us for an Appointment

As part of your physical therapy treatment, we can teach you to find your natural posture to protect your body from future injuries and make sure you stay healthy! Contact Cornerstone Physical Therapy today to learn more about how we can help you live pain-free!

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4499985/>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5889545/>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5684019/>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31789300/>

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



CODY CHOATE, PTA

Cody Choate grew up in Spiro, a small town in eastern Oklahoma. Cody attended Oklahoma State University in Okmulgee where he obtained an Associate in Science degree in Pre-Education Secondary. Cody was very active in playing baseball and football as a kid. His passion for physical

therapy started after tearing his ACL while playing high school football. In 2009, Cody graduated from Carl Albert State College in Poteau, Oklahoma with his Associate of Applied Science degree in Physical Therapy Assistant. He then began working in an orthopedic outpatient setting. After a few years of working, Cody ventured into travel therapy, where his first assignment placed him in Texas. Cody fell in love with the DFW area and decided to settle in the area where he worked in skilled nursing facilities and home health for several years gaining experience and knowledge. However, out of all the therapy settings Cody has worked in, the outpatient setting is his favorite.

Cody loves working with orthopedic patients and enjoys this setting because he can help patients get back to their full potential and their hobbies — their life. He loves watching his patients make progress and seeing the excitement they have when they meet their goals. Cody joined the Cornerstone team in September 2022 and is very happy to be back in the outpatient setting.

Outside of work, Cody loves watching football, especially the Oklahoma Sooners and the 49ers; Cody's interests include going to the gym to work out, fishing, and watching movies. Cody enjoys spending time with his wife, his two boys, and two dogs.

FREE 15 MIN. CONSULTATION



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Healthy Recipe CANDY CORN SMOOTHIE

- 1 cup frozen mango chunks
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 thumb-sized piece of turmeric
- 1 cup frozen pineapple chunks

Place 2 clear cups in the freezer. Pour the milk into a blender. Slice the banana and add it to the blender. Blend until smooth. Remove the cups from the freezer and spoon the banana mixture evenly into the bottom of each of the cups. Return the cups to the freezer for 5 to 10 minutes. Rinse out the blender. Add the mangoes and turmeric and blend until smooth. Take the cups out of the freezer and spoon the mango layer evenly into the cups. Return to the freezer for 5 to 10 minutes. Rinse out the blender. Add the pineapple, and blend until smooth. Spoon evenly into the cups and serve.



https://www.foodmatters.com/article/candy-corn-smoothie?utm_source=fmsite&utm_medium=fmsite

PATIENT SUCCESS STORY

Cornerstone PT would like to say CONGRATULATIONS to a wonderful patient we had the pleasure of helping! Stacey came to us with severe low back pain that radiated throughout her leg, with decreased range of motion. It made each day hard. Dr. Mankerious created a therapy plan and home exercise program for her individual PT needs. Along with one-on-one and hands-on treatments, Stacey showed great progress, decreased pain and increased range of motion! It was wonderful having the opportunity to assist in her recovery journey, we are happy to help with any future PT needs!



"It really helped my range of motion, the therapist was very hands-on and understanding. I thank God for this wonderful therapist." — Stacey H.

Share your success story for a chance to be featured in next month's newsletter! Leave us a review by scanning the QR code; this will allow others to receive the same great care that they deserve.



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We are beyond excited to share our new location with you! We can't wait to bring you the same quality care in a new and convenient location.



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