

# Effects, Causes, & Fixes

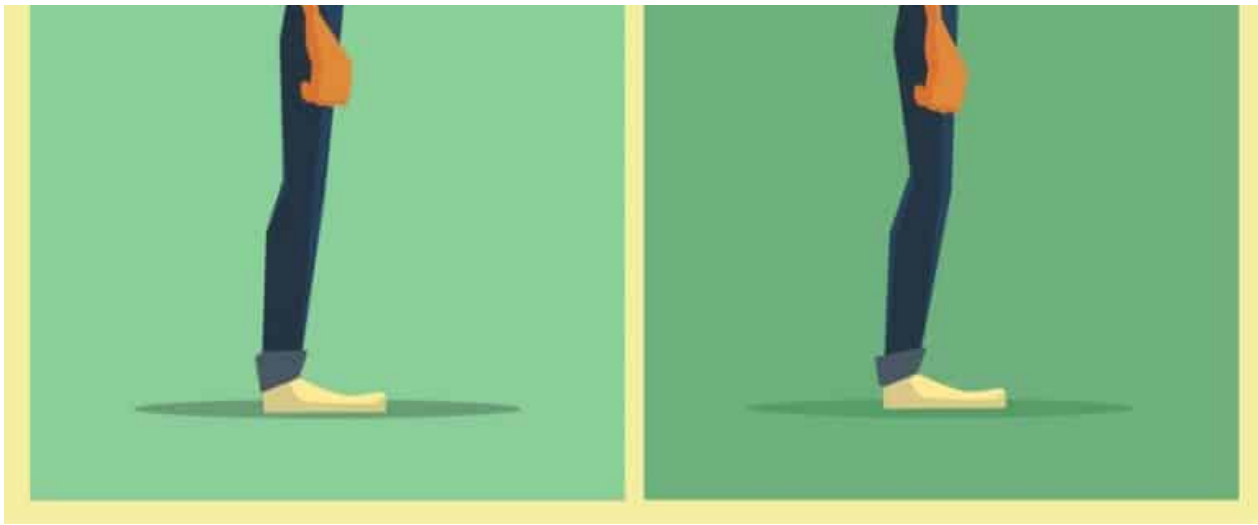
Modern life is killing your body. It's a sad fact that despite the modern world's advances in health and medicine, our bodies are suffering more than ever. Our posture is the first to go. Bad posture leads to a host of other health problems.

The human body did not evolve to work in harmony with the technology of today. Our dependency on computers, smartphones, and cars produces adverse effects on our human forms. Forms designed to live in a more primitive environment.

Back pain is a very common complaint. Doctors' offices are full of people with back, shoulder, and neck pain. Office desks and cars put us in biomechanically bad positions. **Tight hip flexors, tight pectoral muscles,** and **forward head lean** contribute to postural alignment issues. Text neck is now a buzzword and has entered the Collins and MacMillan dictionaries as a noun in modern usage. Sore necks are the new "sore backs".

Even **sitting on a toilet is biomechanically disastrous.** The seated position puts our digestive system at a disadvantage. For millions of years we humans assumed the squat position at toilet time. Unlike some cultures in Asia and Africa, western civilisation has fully adopted the toilet seat. Sitting to poo is often one of the main contributing factors in cases of haemorrhoids.

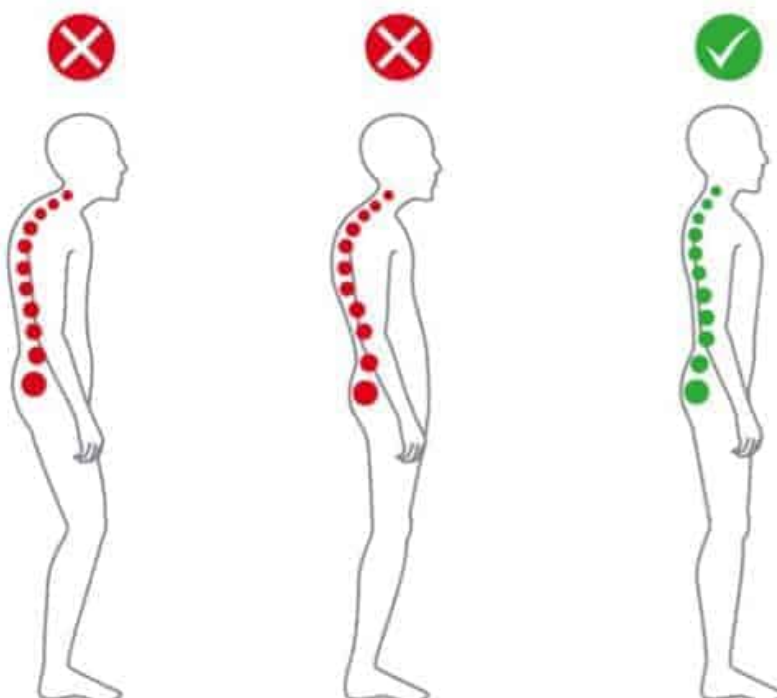




## Good Posture Vs Bad Posture

Take a look at the image below. The figure on the left and the figure in the centre show all the features of bad posture. Swayback, forward lean, hunched shoulders, weight over toes. By contrast, the figure on the right is standing tall with shoulders pulled back. The eyes look straight ahead and there is no forward lean of the neck. The back has its natural curvature and the weight of the body is over the heels.

**This is the ideal body alignment for health.**



News about the ill effects of bad posture on the body are common these days but many people still do not take action. Doing something now about your poor posture will help prevent major permanent damage later.

Desk jockeys and mobile phone addicts are those most likely to develop poor postural habits. The rounded-shoulder and forward-head postures they adopt cause havoc with their health.

***Poor posture is the root cause of many painful conditions that people attribute to genetics and bad luck.***

The most debilitating postural issues often develop from the effects of poor sitting posture on the body. Some of these issues are:

- **Back Pain** – Your spine health is fundamental to your wellbeing. Put your spine in a less than optimal position for long periods of time on a daily basis and you can expect your quality of life to suffer.
- **Neck Pain** – Neck pain is a common complaint of people that sit at desks for extended periods. The average office worker on a laptop computer is a class example. Angling your head down to view the screen will add to the problem. Neck pain is also a frequent problem for younger people with addictions to mobile phones. The effects of decades of “text neck” has yet to be seen but already there are signs that stiff neck syndrome will become as common as back pain in the future.
- **Shoulder Pain** – The shoulders are often the first part of the body to suffer from the effects of slouching. Upper back pain often results from tightness in the front of the shoulders. As you slouch and round your shoulders the muscles of the front of the body become tight. The opposing muscles loosen and the entire spine is pulled out of line. This is where the pain starts. Many people focus on stretching the back muscles when they experience pain in this area. But stretching the pecs and front of shoulders will have a greater impact.

Other effects of bad posture include

- **Digestive issues** – Even sitting with ‘good posture’ affects digestion negatively. But sitting with poor posture causes your digestion to slow down. If you’ve experienced bloating and heartburn after a big lunch at the office desk you’re probably nodding their head right now.
- **Headaches** – The body is one big connected system. Imagine the wheel of a bicycle. If you tighten one spoke too much then the entire wheel loses its shape and strength. When your back and shoulders are tight from incorrect posture, the effects are often felt through the

neck and into the head. Tension in the upper back and shoulders will cause the neck to stiffen and “tension headaches”.

- **Depression and low energy levels** are often direct results of poor posture and this can lead to a vicious cycle. The depression sufferer will often slouch due to their condition, and this compounds the effect.
- **Stress** – Humans evolved to perform very different functions than the ones we currently perform today. The stress of combat or of being chased by wild animals is no longer part of the average westerners day. However, the so-called fight-or-flight stress hormones are still produced by our bodies. **A stressed or frightened animal will make themselves appear smaller as a submissive gesture. The crouched position is also used to protect vital organs.** Humans still display similar behaviour, a leftover from our prehistoric days. Imagine you’re curled up in front of a computer with rounded shoulders. When this becomes your body’s natural state stress hormones enter the bloodstream. On a long-term basis, this can make you sick. Standing tall sends signals to the body that you are confident and you are not in a threatening environment. The body, in turn, reacts by suppressing the release of stress hormones.

## What Can You Do About Bad Posture?

Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do. Most people can achieve great success with the help of a trained physiotherapist or [deep tissue massage therapist](#). Unfortunately, it’s not always possible to reverse the effects of years of abuse. For some people, years of sitting with a hunched over posture cause the build-up of calcium deposits along the spine. This makes the spine less flexible and reduces your range of motion.

A physiotherapist can determine the range of motion of your spine and work on improving flexibility within safe levels.

### Follow these 5 steps for better posture

1. Stretch. Stretching causes the body to produce feel-good hormones. It also takes little time or effort and helps combat muscle tightness.  
To start with, try the following exercises:
  - In a standing or seated position with good straight back posture, push your chin as far back as you can. This gives you a double-chin so this might be an exercise to perform in private. Keep the shoulders back while stretching the back of the neck. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat.
  - Stand up straight and tall. Interlock your fingers behind your back, pull your shoulders back and down and straighten your arms. Your hands should be around waist level and pointed downwards. Feel the stretch across the pecs. Add the neck stretch exercise above at the same time once you’ve mastered this stretch.
2. Invest in a proper ergonomic workstation if you have a job that requires you to use a computer all day. A standing desk with a screen and keyboard set to optimal levels for your

computer all day. A standing desk with a screen and keyboard set to optimal levels for your body is ideal.

3. Exercise every day. Walk, swim, play football, or hit the gym. Unless your doctor advises against it, we'd recommend avoiding stationary bikes, pec machines, and any piece of equipment that makes you sit (except for the rowing machine). Avoid over-working the muscles of the chest and front of shoulders. Men, in particular, love working on those chest muscles but the fact is that these muscles are already tight from slouching. Focus on exercises that hit the upper back, the core, and the glutes. And when you're finished stretch out the pecs, hip flexors, and hamstrings.

**Exercise that fix bad posture include:**

- Seated cable row
- Standing cable row
- Farmer's carry with dumbbells
- Bridge (for core)
- Deadlifts
- Goblet squats

Your physiotherapist or personal trainer will advise you on the proper technique for each of these postural correction exercises.

4. Add a weekly class of yoga to your routine. Yoga is designed to help posture and wellbeing so it's a perfect complement to an exercise routine for combatting postural problems.

5. See a [massage therapist](#) or physiotherapist on a regular basis. This could be one of the best