

HEALTH

SCOTTSDALE

07/14

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MEN AND WOMEN

**TECH
BACK**

DO YOU HAVE IT?

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CARNICLE**

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SWIM
-SUIT
FIT,**

HEALTHY
LIFESTYLES,
AND HER
INSPIRATION

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AND
FRILLS**

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NEED TO MASTER
THE GRILL

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FRUIT**

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KNOWING
WHEN
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6 SNACKS UNDER
100 CALORIES!**



DO YOU HAVE TECH BACK?

Take a look at what's happening to your posture... and do something about it!

BY DR. STEVEN WEINIGER

More and more we're slumped over computers or hunched over cell phones and tablets—and it's wreaking havoc on our posture. Mom told us to "stand up straight," but the stress on our body of being squeezed behind a desk and fixed in front of a keyboard is why doctors and posture specialists are treating new problems like text neck, computer back and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Awareness of a problem is always the first step towards improvement. Especially if your lifestyle isn't going to change, start a monthly habit of looking at, and documenting, what the world sees when you believe you're standing tall.

Checking out the current state of your posture is not just about alleviating pain or looking better and younger. Years of bad habits and repetitive motion cause changes in how our body functions. Gravity and muscle weakness cause posture degeneration, as well as real health consequences. Movement is often restricted, flexibility decreases, and the ability to breathe deeply is lost, leading to a reduced desire to exercise and be active. This is often the beginning of an unhealthy, lifelong cycle.

Improving posture is easy—follow these three steps for a do-it-yourself postural analysis.

3 STEPS TO STANDING TALLER

STEP 1: Take a posture picture

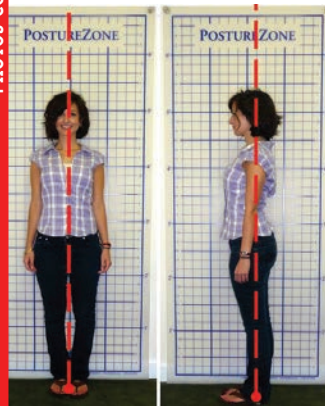
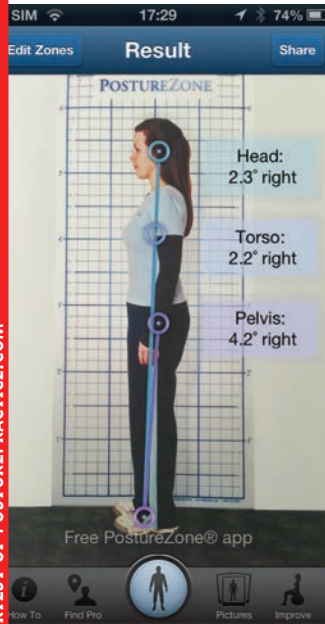
Use a free posture app like PostureZone, or any cell phone camera, to set a baseline for the current state of your posture. You'll need a friend to snap the picture—selfies don't work. Have your friend take three pictures of you: one each from the front, back and side. Be sure to stand straight with what feels like your best posture.

STEP 2: Print your postural pictures

Print out each picture to a separate sheet. Put a dot between your feet on the front and back view, and on your ankle on the side view. Then fold each paper in half vertically, neatly at the dot.

STEP 3: Check your postural symmetry

FRONT AND BACK VIEW PICTURES: The two halves of your body should appear balanced. If your head or torso is off to one side, or one arm hangs further from the body, or one hand hangs lower than the other, your posture is not symmetrical.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF POSTUREPRACTICE.COM

SIDE VIEW PICTURE: The line starting at your ankle should pass through your hip, shoulder and ear. If your head is far forward of that line, you may have a posture distortion called Forward Head Posture (FHP).

If you're like most people (and you probably are), you'll be amazed to learn your perception of "best posture" translates to something not quite so straight and balanced when captured in an image. You'll also note some opportunities for improvement.

File your self-check posture analysis away to compare to new posture pictures in the coming months. Over time, you'll use previous assessments to notice changes... for better or worse.

CHOOSE SMART POSTURE HABITS

Many people find taking the first step towards becoming aware helps them stand and sit taller throughout the day. You can make it easier to adapt to new habits by choosing a good chair when sitting. An exercise ball to replace your chair is a fun choice, especially if you want to strengthen your balance, as well. Remember to unfold your body by standing up tall and stretching during regular posture breaks two or three times an hour.

It's smart to add posture awareness to any exercise you do. Exercising with poor posture will train you to stand and move poorly. If your posture picture revealed any imbalance, or you've had back pain or neck

issues in the past, add focused posture exercise to your daily routine. Yoga, StrongPosture®, and pilates are exercises that will work deep core muscles that are great for building body awareness and control.

At the end of the day, posture is very personal. If you prefer to work with a professional, a Certified Posture Exercise Professionals (CPEP), as well as many chiropractors, physical therapists, trainers and others, specialize in posture. They will assess the mechanics of your body and recommend a posture analysis as the first step to correlate posture biomechanics with any symptoms or pain.

Your posture is more than how the world sees you; it affects every function of the body. Amazingly, it just takes a bit of effort to strengthen your posture and create an anti-aging habit to make you look and feel better, avoid injury, and exercise effectively to stay active and age well.

Posture expert Dr. Steven Weiniger is the author of Stand Taller Live Longer—An Anti-Aging Strategy; a self-help guide to improve posture, and serves as senior editor of BodyZone.com, an online wellness resource that offers an international directory of posture specialists. He can be contacted via www.posturepractice.com. For more on do-it-yourself posture analysis and tips on how to improve your posture, visit www.strongposture.com.