

WORKING MOTHER



WORKPLACE

Straight Talk: Posture Tips for Workmoms

Whether you spend your day sitting at a desk or standing at a counter, we've asked the experts for advice on stopping that stoop.

By Marisa LaScala

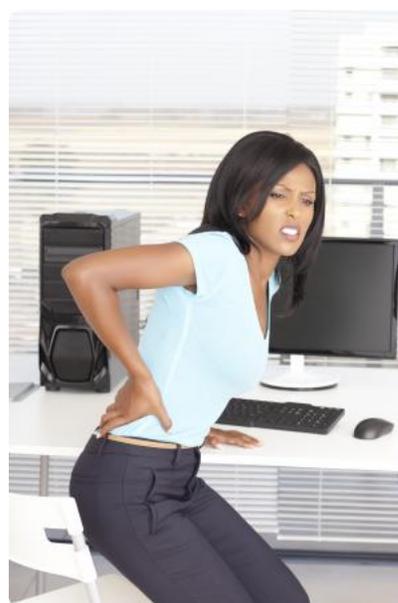
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Do long hours at work leave you tired, aching and in desperate need of a massage? Sounds like you need a posture check. It doesn't matter if you sit at a desk all day or stand up at a counter—though ideally you should be switching between the two—keeping yourself aligned can be the key to diminishing those aches that creep up in the lower back and seep into your feet.

It's important to note, however, that human bodies are full of quirks, so "close enough" is okay when we're talking about posture. "Most people's bodies aren't drawn perfectly, so nobody sits perfectly," says Dr. Steven Weiniger, chiropractor, author of *Stand Taller Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy* and managing partner of [bodyzone.com](https://www.bodyzone.com) (<https://www.bodyzone.com>). "What's important is that we're working towards aligned, not perfectly aligned."

Straighten up and see what the experts have to say about attaining that better-than-slouching position.



If You Sit All Day

Movement is key. "The more you sit, the more you have to sit," says Bill Boland, exercise physiologist and founder of [BodyFix Method](http://bodyfixmethod.com/) (<http://bodyfixmethod.com/>). "Why? The muscles for locomotion and standing just stop having the strength to offset the inactivity of sitting." In addition to keeping these posture tips in mind, make sure you move about throughout the day, mixing non-computer tasks into your schedule.

Go in feet-first. "When we talk about posture, we talk from the bottom-up," Dr. Weiniger says. "Unless you get your pelvis down straight, for example, your shoulders will round forward." All of our experts recommend sitting with your feet flat on the floor, knees equal to or lower than hips and even with ankles, elbows at 90 degrees, wrists flat, shoulders back and straight and your chair back at a 100°-110° reclined angle. And, like your mom used to tell you, sit up nice and tall!

Raise your monitor. Keep that head up! "Every ten degrees that your neck is bent forward increases the strain on your neck by 10 pounds," says [Dr. Todd Sinett](http://www.drstinett.com/) (<http://www.drstinett.com/>), chiropractor, applied kinesiologist and author of the upcoming book, *3 Weeks to a Better Back* (due out in October).

If You Stand All Day

Think about the body as a whole. "Good posture standing or walking is being aligned," Boland says "Keep your

head level, shoulders down and relaxed toward the spine, in line with hips, knees and ankles.”

Give your feet a break. Again, good posture starts from the bottom: Most of the time, you should keep both feet flat to distribute the weight equally. It is good, however, to give your feet a break. “Get a small, 10-inch-tall box,” Dr. Weiniger suggests. “Prop one foot up on it, then the other, to give your feet a rest.”

Make sure your workstation is the right height. Don’t look down at your work. “You want to keep elbows at 90-degrees to ensure your shoulders are being kept back,” Dr. Sinett says. “If you have a tendency to look down at the keyboard, this will cause rounded shoulders, so it’s important to keep your head in neutral posture looking straight at the monitor.”

Remember that both sitting and standing for long periods of time can both be bad for you if you don’t switch it up every once in a while. “It’s not about sitting or standing,” Dr. Weiniger says. “It’s about moving.”

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