



# Posture Perfect

One route to aging gracefully is through maintaining good posture. Find out how and why.

**D**r. Steven P. Weiniger was trained as a chiropractor and oversees an Atlanta-based clinical practice focused on posture rehabilitation and biomechanics. He authored “Stand Taller—Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy” and served as a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging. In between, he’s often spotlighted in the national media, writes articles and papers, and gives seminars and lectures. He took time out of his schedule to talk with *è Bella* about why posture—a seemingly overlooked subject—plays a significant role in health and longevity.

## Q&A

DR. STEVEN P. WEINIGER

### PARENTS USED TO NAG THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR POSTURE. DO THEY STILL DO THAT—OR HAS IT FALLEN TO THE WAYSIDE?

Posture has largely fallen to the wayside. It has become “not okay” to criticize somebody’s

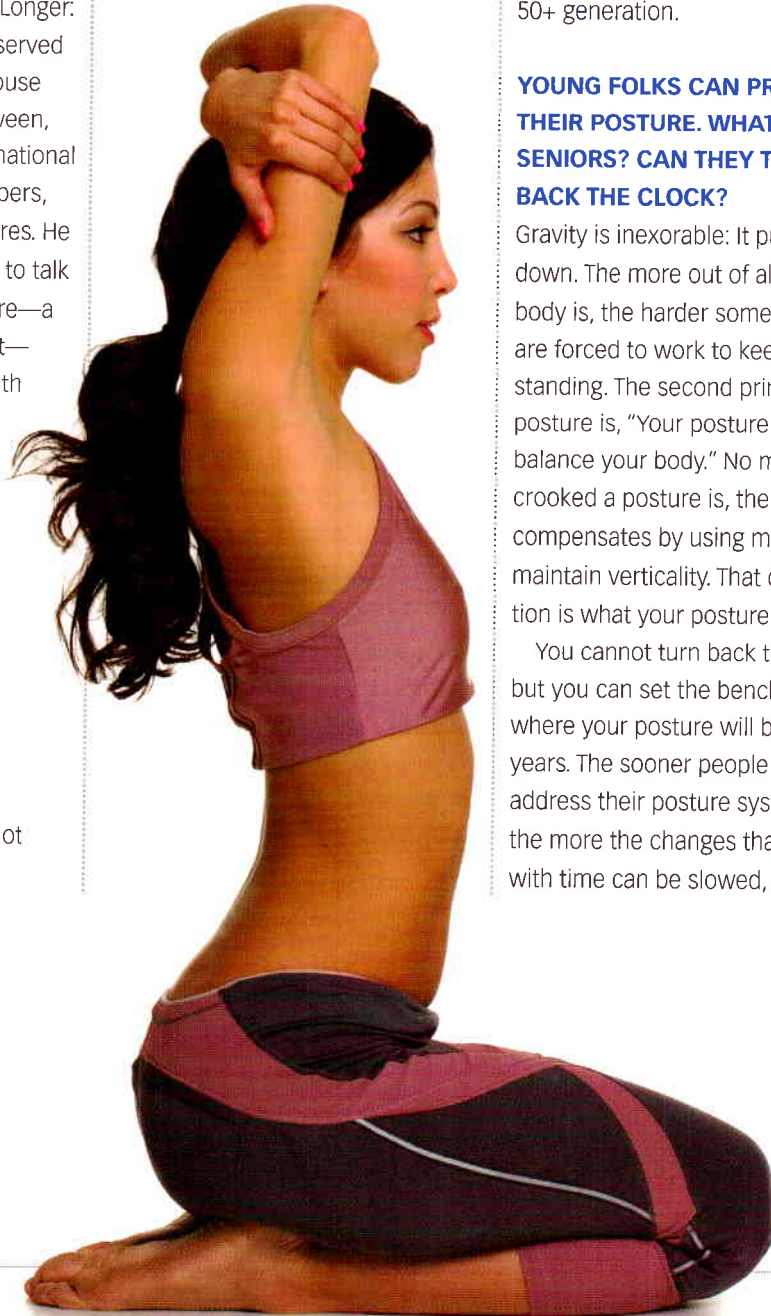
body. However, an unfortunate side effect is that things that do make a difference—your posture and carriage—are not receiving the focus they should. We have a

Nintendo generation that’s slumped over video games, keyboards and cellphones. As they get older, unless behaviors change, their slump will result in a generation with worse posture than we see in the current 50+ generation.

### YOUNG FOLKS CAN PRESERVE THEIR POSTURE. WHAT ABOUT SENIORS? CAN THEY TURN BACK THE CLOCK?

Gravity is inexorable: It pulls a body down. The more out of alignment a body is, the harder some muscles are forced to work to keep the body standing. The second principle of posture is, “Your posture is how you balance your body.” No matter how crooked a posture is, the person compensates by using muscles to maintain verticality. That compensation is what your posture is.

You cannot turn back the clock but you can set the benchmark for where your posture will be in 10 years. The sooner people start to address their posture systematically, the more the changes that occur with time can be slowed, and



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sometimes reversed. How far? There's no way to tell, but the sooner someone adopts better posture habits, the better.

Not surprisingly, back pain is on the rise and posture is a really big factor. The idea of posture exercise is adding a daily routine to unfold peoples' posture.

#### WHAT ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF POOR POSTURE?

We talk about the 3 Ds: DNA, damage and daily habits. Your posture results from your genetics, the accumulation of soft tissue changes from long-term habits—such as sitting in front of the computer or working out with bad form—combined with damage from injuries that were not fully rehabilitated.

#### WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR IMPROVING ONE'S POSTURE?

{1} Be conscious of how you sit and stand.

{2} Move! Unfold from sitting—sit less, walk more. Breathe deep and open your chest. Change body position often. Do posture exercises and stretches daily.

{3} Invest in good shoes and a good mattress.

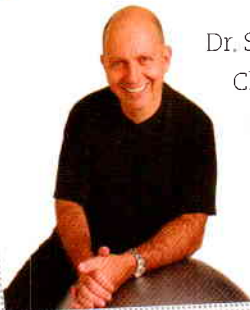
{4} Exercise regularly with an awareness of using your best posture.

#### HOW DOES A "TALLER YOU" EQUATE WITH "LIVING LONGER?"

Everyone knows people lose height as they age, but did you know your life could get shorter as you get shorter? According to a recent 20-year study, there is a strong correlation between losing height and mortality. Researchers at the University of London divided 4,200 men aged 40-59 into four groups by how much height they lost over 20 years:

- ❖ Less than 1 cm
- ❖ 1-2 cm
- ❖ 2-3 cm
- ❖ Over 3 cm

Men who lost more than 3 cm of height had 1.45 times the risk of dying, compared to those who lost less than 1 cm. The authors speculated that the physical restriction of the lungs and abdominal organs caused significantly greater risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and respiratory mortality. ☹



Dr. Steven P. Weiniger will be speaking at the Florida Chiropractic Association's Winter Convention & Expo 2013 at the Naples Grande Resort & Club, scheduled for Nov. 21-24. It is designed for chiropractic physicians, assistants, massage therapists and x-ray technicians. For details: 888-722-1270

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