

Options and References for a Healthier Life

Care

WINTER

magazine®

Never believe
that a few caring people
can't change the world.
For, indeed, that's all
who ever have.

—Margaret Mead



Workplace Posture: *Linking Health and Productivity*

by Dr. Michael Jorgensen



Today's work environment, especially work that requires long hours of sitting, is hostile to the short and long term well-being of people. Put simply, the human body was not designed to sit for long periods of time. In fact, the first of 5 *Principles of Posture* is "The Body is Made to Move." (1)

The human body is a complex and dynamic mechanical system that thrives best with movement. Sitting for extended periods of time is antithetical to humans, yet it is a modern day requirement. Since it is a requirement of such a large portion of the population, it is critical that employers recognize the importance of posture training exercises and incorporate preventive strategies into the work day of its employees.

The human body detests stasis. Movement is literally a nutrient that the body requires. Whether it's causing muscles to contract and strengthen, increase oxygenation, pumping venous blood back to the heart or to be cleansed by the liver, getting things moving in the body suits our physiology.

According to posture expert Dr. Steven Weiniger, when people spend most of their lives sitting, they literally forget many of the subtle ways their body should be able to move. This kind of "motion amnesia" happens when nerves aren't stimulated from movement. Technically known as neurological *proprioception*, *movement* literally "charges the brain's batteries" by keeping more muscle and nerve fibers working for full function.

The Perils of Sitting

Understanding this, we can infer that inactivity and prolonged sitting can actually foster mental health conditions such as depression from this deprivation of movement. In fact, according to researchers at the Mayo Clinic, anti-depressants are one of the top two medications prescribed in the U.S.

A daily regimen of posture and muscle strengthening, mobility increasing, and proprioception-driving exercises is one of the easiest and valuable programs an employer can support and implement. How long will it take for corporate America to get the picture?

Posture affects every physiologic function from breathing to blood pressure. People with strong posture recover faster from injuries, exercise more effectively, have a more positive outlook on life, and even look more youthful. So, it stands to reason that integrating comprehensive posture training programs in the workplace to equip workers with self-help strategies is a valuable investment in people and productivity.

Today's posture specialists are standing at the forefront of cultural change, especially in the workplace. The baby boomer population is demanding ways to stay young and fend off old age. Having "strong posture" is one of the best ways to do just that. Physicians, therapists and trainers specializing in the posture field are working to engage their communities and be the leaders to usher in this new wave of preventive health habits that for so long, has been ignored.

(1) - Weiniger, Steven. "Stand Taller Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy." BodyZone Press, 2008.

THE PERILS OF SITTING

POSTUREZONE 4	HEAD & NECK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neck Pain• Headaches• Tight Shoulders
POSTUREZONE 3	TORSO & ARMS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper Back Ache• Mid-Back Burning• Shallow Breath• Arm or Hand Tingling
POSTUREZONE 2	LOW BACK & PELVIS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low Back Discomfort• Sacroiliac Pain• Sore & Stiff Hips
POSTUREZONE 1	LEGS & FEET <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sciatica Nerve Pain• Throbbing Knees• Aching Feet• Toe Numbness

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Take frequent posture stretch breaks and check your PostureZone alignment monthly.

About the Author: Dr. Mike Jorgensen is a chiropractor and Certified Posture Exercise Professional specializing in workplace wellness.