

Posture

We always hear about the importance of posture. Your mom or a teacher constantly reminded you when you were young to “sit-up straight”! So let’s take a closer look and see if they were onto something.

First a study and the importance of posture?

Posture affects and moderates: spinal pain, headache, mood, blood pressure, pulse, respiration, [sympathetic function](#), [homeostasis](#), [autonomic regulation](#), breathing and [hormone production](#). Sound pretty important! American Journal of Pain Management, 1994

Dramatic respiratory changes.

Did you know that after age 20 that your [vital capacity](#), (maximum volume of air that a person can exhale after maximum inhalation), decreases 5-20% per decade! Mostly due to postural changes! Brian K Ross MD, University of Washington

A quote from someone in the know:

“Better than 90% of the energy output of the brain is used in relating to the physical body in its gravitational field. The more mechanically distorted a person is (bad posture), the less energy available for thinking, metabolism and healing.” - [Dr. Roger Sperry, Nobel Laureate](#)

Sit-up Straight! Loss of proper joint structure and function (due to poor posture) increases adhesion formation in the soft tissue in and around the spine. Grieve, Common Vertebral Joint Problems, 1988

Now go take a look. Next time you are out, start observing people over 50. First ask yourself; do they have good or bad posture. Then ask yourself if they look healthy or not. You will discover that almost always people with good posture look younger and healthier than those with bad posture. Very interesting indeed.

How about a couple of demonstrations? Try this.

First sit-up straight and take a big breath in and out. Notice how full a breath you can take. Now hunch over and breathe again. The difference is obvious. With chiropractic adjustments and proper stretching you can maintain or improve your ability to breathe.

Here is another demonstration. Try this.

Stand up straight with good posture, (head directly over shoulders, no tilted head) and put your arm out at 90° to your side. Have someone behind you push down on your arm as you resist their effort. Your shoulder should hold strong. Now slump over ([anterior head translation](#) and flexion) with bad posture and have your partner push down again, your shoulder should be weak and you should have some difficulty holding it up. That does seem odd, it is as if your muscle was shut off. Try this on your family and friends.

Explanation. With good posture your brain can communicate through your spinal cord to all your muscles and vital organs. In turn your muscles and vital organs can communicate back to your brain. This is your [autonomic nervous system](#) at work. There is a constant two-way flow of information that helps run all your systems and keeps you alive. With poor posture you can see that information is slowed and the systems do not work at 100%. With proper posture you can maintain proper nervous system function.

Big benefit! Maintaining your autonomic nervous system function is one of many benefits of chiropractic care that has nothing to do with pain. All too often the public thinks that chiropractic care is only useful for low back pain. Not so, in future blogs we will continue to discuss other benefits of care that are not pain related.