

## **A New Way to Look at Posture**

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When most people think of posture, they immediately remember their mother poking them between the shoulder blades or being forced to walk around with a book on their head – all to look better. Working on your posture does much more than that. If used effectively, posture can complement your rehab following surgery and it can be a low-energy way to work on back pain.

For example, immediately after surgery on a shoulder, it is crucial for you to align the head and shoulders to prevent a forward head with rounded shoulders. If you do not do this, the ball of your arm bone will move forward in your shoulder socket. This will force extra work on the rotator cuff muscles, which can cause irritation and slow down the healing process. Sitting as instructed by your therapist, you will not only prevent this irritation, you will begin strengthening the muscles by your shoulder blades which are often overlooked.

Another example of benefiting from good posture is in regard to back pain. Often, in the early phases of rehab, one's exercise endurance is reduced and they become noncompliant with their exercise program. Did you know that sitting with good posture when eating, at the computer or when driving is actually considered harder to do, because you need to do it more often and it is done for longer periods of time? It is also an excellent way to maintain the progress achieved in therapy. Think about it. How long do you think the relief you receive in therapy will last if you slump in the car on the way home and then slump some more at the computer?

Give yourself short term goals, starting with sitting well during lunch or while you return emails for 10 minutes. As your endurance increases, it will also become easier to complete your other exercises. Habits are hard to change, but in the long run, having improved posture can help prevent a reoccurrence of back pain.

**WPTI** physical therapists are trained to evaluate a patient's posture and instruct you in proper habits. Call today for an evaluation!