

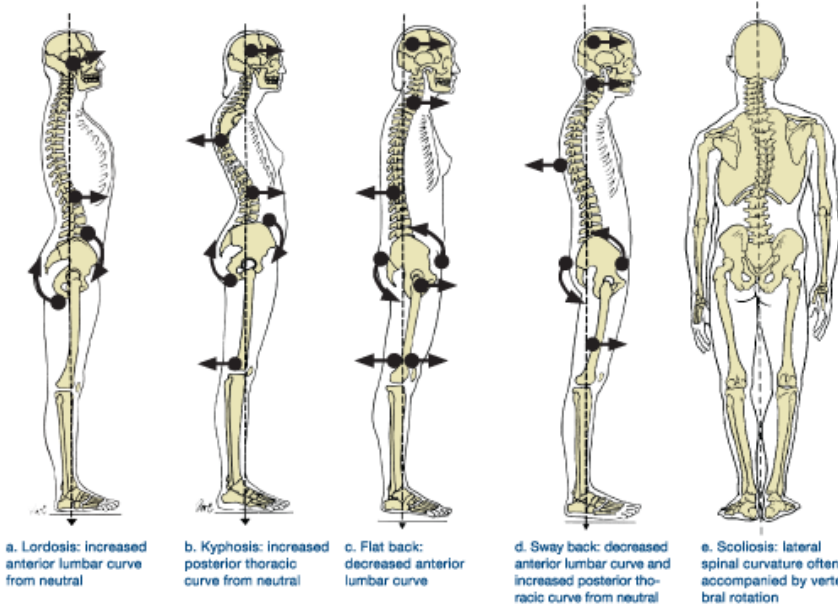


Ten Exercises for Ideal Posture

Exercises that keep the core, hamstrings, scapular stabilisers, lower back and neck flexors strong can assist in achieving ideal posture.

Common postural issues arise from muscle imbalances, particularly with tight chest, hamstring, neck extensors and hip flexor muscles.

Office work and prolonged sitting can contribute to unwanted muscle imbalances.



To prevent unwanted muscle imbalances, the following exercise are recommended.



Double chins

(strengthens neck flexors): Tuck chin in without bending head forward. Keep shoulders back and down. Complete 2-3 sets of 6-10 second holds.

Scapular retraction (strengthens upper back):

Sit or stand with upright posture. Draw shoulder blades back and down. Hold/squeeze for 3-5 secs. Complete 2-3 sets of 6-10 x 3-5 s holds.

Lordosis: Tight muscles include hip flexors (e.g. quadriceps) and weak muscles include the core, glutes and lower back.

Kyphosis: Tight muscles include the chest and hip flexors. Weak muscles include the neck flexors, scapular stabilisers, core, glutes and lower back.

Flat back: Tight muscles include the chest, hamstrings, lower back and glutes. Weak muscles include the neck flexors, scapular stabilizers and hip flexors.

Sway back: Tight muscles include the hamstrings, glutes, lower back and chest; and weak muscles include the core, head flexors, hip flexors and scapular stabilisers.

Scoliosis: Improving core strength and scapular stabilization can minimize symptoms.





Bridges (strengthens core, glutes and hamstrings): Place a theraband around your upper legs (you can do this exercise without the band if you wish – it will just work the glutes less). Slowly peel your spine up from the floor into a 'ski slope position'. Squeeze your glute and keep your knees and feet hip-width apart. Pause 2-3 seconds and slowly peel back down, trying to get each vertebrae to touch the floor. Complete 2-4 sets of 8-12 repetitions.



Bird-Dog (strengthens lower back, glutes, shoulder stabilisers, core): Start with hands beneath shoulders and knees beneath hips. Raise opposite arm to leg. As you lift, extend away at the same time (as if someone is pulling you away from your shoulder and hip joints). Repeat on the other side. Complete 2-4 sets of 8-15 repetitions.



Neck stretch (rotation): Sit on one hand or grasp edge of chair or bench. Turn and look over opposite shoulder. Increase stretch by pushing chin to look over shoulder. Maintain upright posture throughout. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat.



Chest stretch: Kneeling or standing, hold a towel behind your back with shoulder-width grip. Lift arms up whilst maintain upright posture. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat.



Neck stretch (lateral flexion): Sit or stand with upright posture. Tilt head toward one shoulder. Keep shoulders down. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat on other side.



Quad/hip flexor stretch: Lie face down. Bend one leg and grasp your ankle. Pull ankle to buttock. Lift knee slightly from floor. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat on other side.

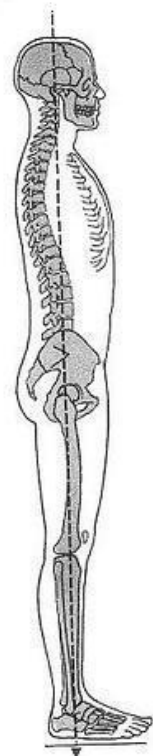


Hamstring stretch: Lie on back. Wrap towel around foot. Raise leg from ground. Keep leg straight without locking knee. Pull leg towards chest. Pull foot towards shin. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat on other side.



Glute stretch: Lie on back, knees bent. Place one foot across opposite knee. Grasp shin of the support leg. Pull toward chest. Hold for 20-40 seconds and repeat on other side.

Aim to do these exercises 3-5 times each week. Alternatively, choose a couple of exercises to do every 1-2 hours when at work. Set a timer on your phone. This will force you to take a break from your seated position for 1-2 minutes. If travelling, these exercises are great to do in your hotel room just before going to bed or as soon as you wake up in the morning. All you need is a towel. Theraband is optional.



Ideal Posture