

NEWSLETTER



STAND UP STRAIGHT!

HOW TO FIX IMPROPER POSTURE FOR BACK AND NECK PAIN RELIEF

“Stand up straight!” has been a refrain from parents throughout the ages, but is it *really* that important? Actually — yes, it is!

Many people assume maintaining proper posture is about appearance: looking tall and confident. In reality, improper posture can cause pain in your neck and upper back and put pressure on your spine, leading to an increased injury risk.

But what exactly is proper posture? It probably won't surprise you to learn that it's more complicated than merely standing up straight. Instead, it's more about finding the right spinal alignment for your body — and that's something the physical therapists at Element Physical Therapy can help you with!

If you're struggling with persistent neck or back pain, it may be time to visit us for a postural assessment. We'll help pinpoint any impairments or imbalances in your spine that might be causing problems and then provide strategies for maintaining your postural alignment throughout the day.

UNDERSTANDING PROPER POSTURE: MOVEMENT AND AWARENESS IS KEY

Let's get this out of the way first: There's no universal “ideal posture” that will work for everyone. Even common advice like “stand up straight” isn't particularly helpful: for one, no one's spine is ever perfectly straight since it has a natural curve pattern. For another, you don't spend your entire life standing still.

Rather than aiming for a non-existent “perfect” posture, you want to focus on two things:

- **Postural Awareness:** People don't set out to have bad posture. You might start the day telling yourself you're not

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going to slouch — but then, as you get busy with other tasks, posture becomes the last thing on your mind. By staying more aware of your posture, you can more easily adapt to the various positions you have to hold throughout the day.

- **Avoid Prolonged Postures:** Your body wants to move. Holding the same posture for extended periods (even if you're sitting up straight and have everything in alignment) is still going to cause problems! Rather than aiming for a "perfect" posture, make sure to change your positions throughout the day. Alternate between sitting and standing. Switch positions. Get up and move around. In short — try to stay as active as possible.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POSTURE AND PAIN

Neck and back pain have several potential causes and contributing factors. Improper posture is often one of them.

When you lose your postural awareness and start to slouch, it puts extra strain on the muscles that support your spine, particularly the muscles in your neck and upper back. This can lead to overuse injuries that cause pain or restricted mobility.

Remaining in prolonged postures (particularly sitting) also puts extra strain on your back muscles. When you get up and move around — even if it's just for a few minutes — you relieve that pressure. Staying active also helps strengthen the muscles of your back and core, which helps prevent common musculoskeletal injuries that can cause pain and dysfunction.

PHYSICAL THERAPY'S ROLE IN IMPROVING POSTURE!

When you visit us for your appointment, here's what we'll do to help you improve your posture and reduce your back and neck pain:

- **We start with a comprehensive postural assessment.** We'll take a look at your posture when you're sitting, standing, and moving, looking for potential areas of dysfunction. We'll also take a complete health history and might run some additional screens, too, testing for strength, mobility, balance, and more.



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- **We help with any acute pain.** Manual therapy techniques and targeted mobility exercises can help relieve your pain and help you get your body's function back.
- **We help strengthen any weak muscles:** Targeted strengthened exercises will help correct any muscular imbalances stemming from improper posture, providing better support and stability to your spine.
- **We offer personalized postural corrections:** The final piece of the puzzle helps ensure lasting relief. We'll provide a customized postural improvement plan that speaks to your unique needs and impairments.

START IMPROVING YOUR POSTURE TODAY!

Fixing improper posture isn't a one-and-done affair, but a visit to Element Physical Therapy can help you get started.

[Call us to schedule your appointment today!](#)

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5-MINUTE EGG AND HUMMUS FLATBREAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp hummus
- 1 whole grain wrap
- 1/4 cup baby arugula
- 1/2 English cucumber, cut into matchsticks
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/8 cup Greek feta, crumbled
- 1 soft-boiled egg, peeled, halved
- 1 tsp chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves

DIRECTIONS Spread the hummus over the wrap. Top with the arugula, cucumber, tomato, feta, egg and parsley. Season and serve.

<https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/5-minute-egg-hummus-flatbread-recipe/gblv1m06>

Call (406) 220-5362

PATIENT SUCCESS

“Marlesa Moore is an exceptional physical therapist who applies a holistic approach to her practice, including: manual therapy, dry needling, pain management strategies, and comprehensive custom exercise programs. She was beyond helpful in alleviating my back injury and chronic back pain. As well, the Element staff are friendly and professional.”

—Cynthia S.

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STAFF SPOTLIGHT



KATIE CLUTE-REINIG PT, DPT

Katie grew up in Mt. Shasta, CA where she developed a love for small mountain towns and the community that comes along with it. She went to the University of Portland where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology. She took two years

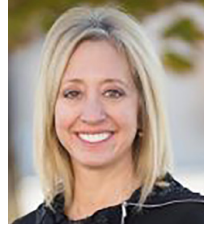
off and worked as a physical therapy aide and receptionist for a clinic in Portland, OR. Katie went on to receive her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Montana.

Throughout her education she started to pursue a focus in neurorehabilitation and vestibular care. Katie employs a patient-centered approach that focuses on the patient's unique needs and goals. She is certified in LSVT-BIG, a specialized approach designed to enhance movement for individuals with Parkinson's Disease. She is deeply committed to improving the lives of her patients by maximizing their functional independence.

Outside of work Katie enjoys hiking and biking around Missoula's beautiful trails, seeing live music and working on sewing projects.

A NOTE FROM AMY

Don't Fear the Postural Assessment!



Hello friends,

We perform lots of postural assessments here at Element Physical Therapy. I've noticed that patients often default to a very stiff, "perfect" posture during the assessment. While I understand the impulse, we really want to see what your day-to-day posture looks like — even if it's less than perfect.

By seeing how you actually stand, sit, and walk, our team can more easily pinpoint the muscular imbalances or impairments that might be causing you pain.

And remember, there's no one "perfect" posture. In fact, PTs have a saying: "Your best posture is your next posture." Keeping your body moving is more important than maintaining a rigid spine.

So, when you come in for a postural assessment, keep it natural! We're a judgment-free zone, and our ultimate goal is to help you move freely without restriction or pain.

All the best,

Amy Downing,

PT, Owner, Emory Certified Vestibular Specialist

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COME BACK TO PT!

STOP THE PAIN!

Come Back to Element Physical Therapy today to start enjoying your life pain-free!

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