

Components of posture and improving posture

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Components of posture

Posture is the position of our body in space

Ideal posture is all joints stacked on top of one another; head/ears over the shoulders, shoulders over hips, hips over knees, and knees over ankles

- Physical and mental aspects
 - Physical: muscles and joints
 - Mental: emotions and environment
 - Stress → tension
- Physical aspects
 - Pelvic tilt: the positioning of your hips
 - Spinal curvature: the positioning of your spine
 - Breathing patterns
 - Energy/muscle activation patterns



Causes and effects of poor posture

➤ Causes:

- Poor posture is often a result of prolonged, repetitive movement (or lack of movement) patterns
- Commonly caused by excessive sitting or standing
 - Desk jobs and/or jobs involving prolonged standing
 - Sitting and watching television for prolonged periods, excessive smartphone/tablet use
- Muscular weakness leads to muscular tension and underactive muscles
 - Caused by chronic underuse
 - Long and underactive (weak) or short and overactive (tight)

➤ Effects:

- Back and neck pain, headaches
 - Spinal dysfunction
 - Muscle weakness, joint pain
- Disrupts digestion
- Poor sleep



Benefits of good posture

- Improves muscle function
 - Allows for increased strength and endurance
- Improves ability to properly strengthen and brace the core
 - Improve balance, athletic performance, etc.
- Decreases joint pain
- Decreases injury risk (joints, muscles)
- Improves spine health
 - Helps with digestion and cognition, fewer headaches
- Improves ability to breathe/breath capacity
- Improves confidence, mood, and energy



Common postural distortions

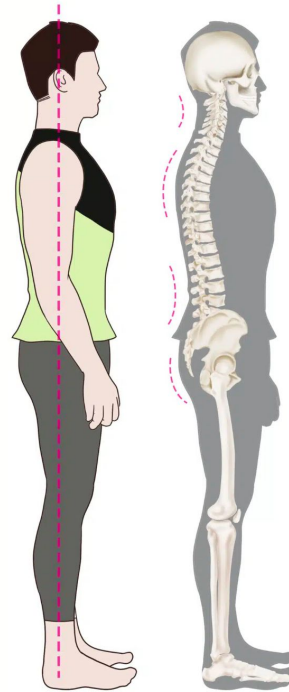
- Excessive Lordosis
- Excessive Kyphosis
- Swayback
- Flatback
- Forward shoulders and head

Excessive lumbar lordosis

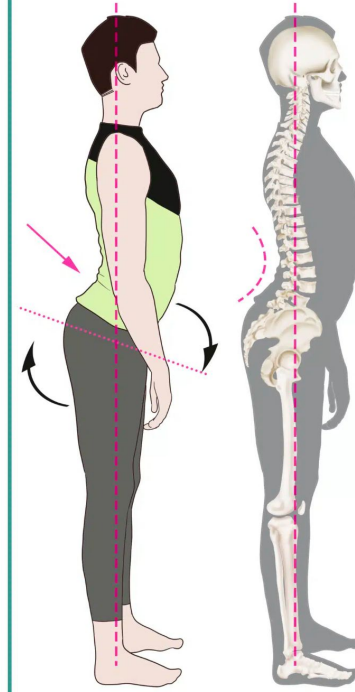
- Lumbar spine is hyperextended, producing an anterior tilt of the pelvis. The hips is flexed, the knees are hyperextended, and the ankles are plantar flexed
 - Abdominal muscles are long and weak. The lower back muscles and hip flexors are short and strong/tight
- Stretch the hip flexors and lower back muscles, strengthen the hip extensors and core

Lumbar lordosis

normal

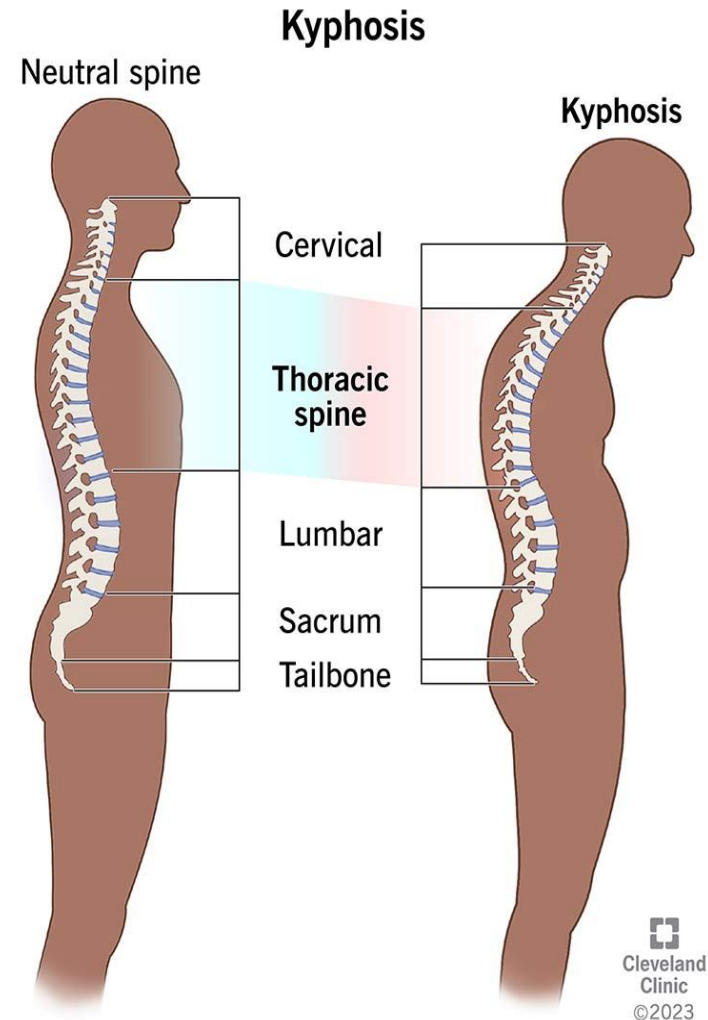


Lumbar lordosis



Excessive kyphosis

- Increased flexion in the thoracic spine. Forward head and hyperextension of the cervical spine. Scapulae are abducted and shoulders are forward
 - Neck flexors and mid back are long and weak. The neck extensors and chest muscles are short and strong/tight
- Stretch the chest and neck extensors, strengthen the neck flexors, mid back, and core



Swayback

- Forward head, hyperextension of the cervical spine, flexion of the thoracic spine, and extension of the lumbar spine extension. Posterior pelvic tilt, hip and knee hyperextension and ankles slightly plantar flexed
 - Neck flexors, mid back, iliopsoas, and abdominal muscles are long and weak. The hip extensors and chest muscles are short and strong/tight
- Stretch the glutes, neck extensors, and chest, strengthen the mid back, iliopsoas and core

Sway Back Posture



Flatback

- Head is forward with cervical spine extension. There is slight flexion of the upper thoracic spine and a straight or flattened appearance of the lower thoracic and lumbar spine. The pelvis is in a posterior tilt, the knees are extended, and the ankles are plantar flexed
 - Neck and hip flexors are long and weak. The neck extensors, hip extensors and chest muscles are short and strong/tight
- Stretch the glutes and chest, strengthen the neck flexors, hip flexors, and core



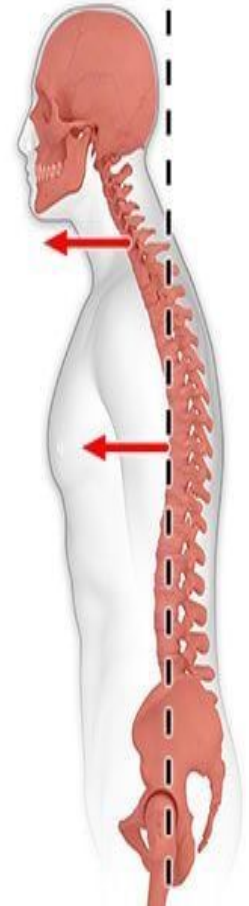
Forward head and shoulders

- Forward shift of the head with the chin poking out. It is caused by increased flexion of the lower cervical spine and upper thoracic spine with increased extension of the upper cervical spine
 - Neck flexors, mid back and rotator cuff are long and weak. The cervical extensors, chest muscles, upper trapezius, and levator scapulae are short and strong/tight
- Stretch the chest and scapular elevators, strengthen the neck flexors, mid back, and rotator cuff/shoulders

Healthy Posture



Forward Head Posture (FHP)





How to improve posture

- Awareness & mindfulness
- Relaxation & breathing
- Stretching and strengthening
 - Identify which pattern is present
 - Consistency is key
 - Be intentful
- MOVE!



How can StretchLab help?

- Assessment of current condition
 - MAPS screening, intro session
- Creation of a customized stretch program
 - Progression through periodization
- Homework
 - Combination of stretching and strengthening
 - X+
- Accountability & education

