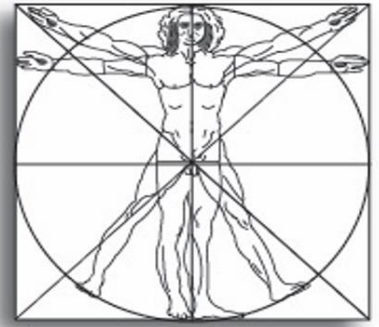


# SOUTHPORT PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTRE



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## Stand Tall - Live Tall: A Guide to Better Posture



Poor posture can play a significant part in many general aches and pains we suffer. It can also contribute to the difficulty of recovering from acute injuries.

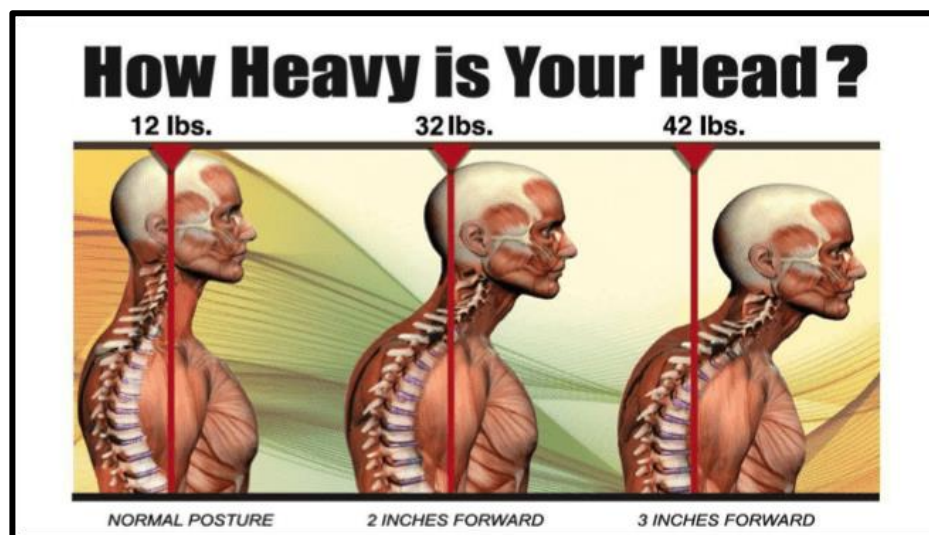
This is particularly apparent now, with working from home becoming more common. But how can you tell if you have bad posture, and is there anything you can do to fix it? Thankfully, the answer is a resounding yes. But before we can fix the problem, we need to understand bad posture symptoms.

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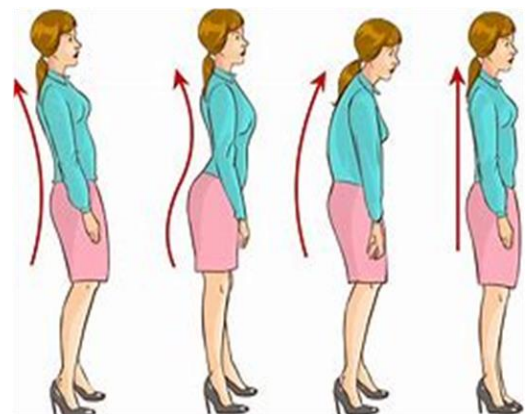
## What is good and bad posture?

Good posture is basically when your body/joint alignment places the least load on your muscular system. Consequently, bad posture can result in muscle fatigue which can lead to aches and pains.



## Bad posture may present with:

- rounded shoulders
- bent knees when standing or walking.
- a forward or backwards lean of the head
- chin poke
- exaggerated spinal curvature.



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Bad posture can result in an array of aches and pains.

Lower back pain, neck pain, headaches, shoulder pain and upper limb pain, such as wrist and elbow pain, can all be the effects of bad posture.



## **How do you develop bad posture?**

There are several possible causes of bad posture.

In the body, there are sets of muscles that are in a sort of ‘tug of war’ – for example, muscles that pull your shoulders forward and muscles that pull your shoulders back. Normally, those muscles are roughly in equilibrium, but when that tug of war isn’t in equilibrium – one set of muscles is ‘winning the war’, so to speak – they’ll tend to pull the joint into a more extreme position. That’s one contributor to bad posture.

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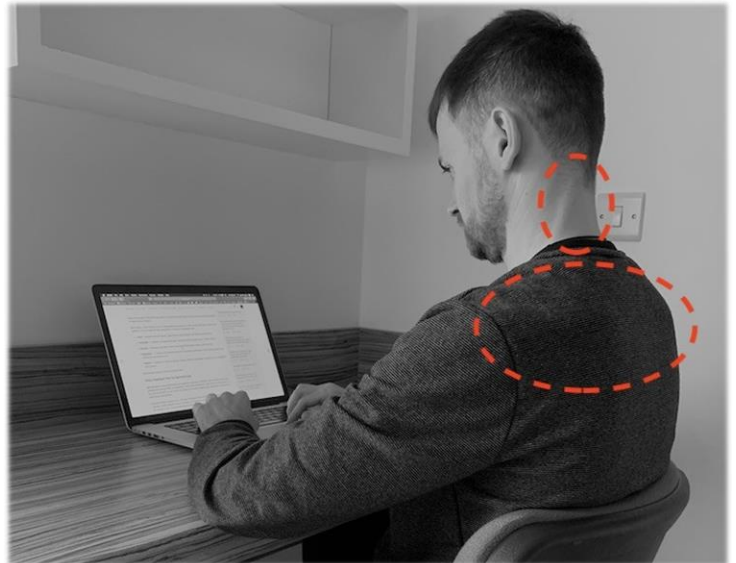
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Poor setup of workstations is another common cause.

When you position your head or other parts of your body incorrectly while looking at a screen, and you sustain that position for an extended time, that will lead to overload of muscles and subsequent muscle fatigue.

Even things like an incorrect spectacle prescription which can cause people to jut their chin forward to better see the screen. This is surprisingly common.

Also certain genetic conditions can affect the spine and hips, injuries, and simple overuse or underuse of muscle groups can all lead to poor posture.



## How can you fix bad posture?

Luckily, it's not difficult or expensive to correct. In fact, things like exercise, gentle stretching and even simply making a conscious effort to stand up straight can all make a big difference when it comes to counteracting the effects of bad posture.

The trick is to change your position, so the muscles don't get a chance to fatigue. Awareness and regular position changes can be effective to correct poor posture before pain presents. Don't let the pain be the reminder.

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Maintaining good strength and mobility in all your muscles means you won't end up with one group that's really strong and going to win that 'tug-of-war' against other muscles that are underused.

Pilates and yoga poses, core strengthening exercises and even taking a daily 10-minute walk can all help counteract the causes of bad posture. Avoid soft, unsupportive seats, use your thighs (not your back) to lift heavy items, and be sure to choose a mattress that is firm enough to support your body.

Many exercises and recommendations are simple and can quite easily be incorporated into your daily lifestyle.

However, for personalised advice, you should book an appointment with your physiotherapist who can put together a treatment plan that best suits you and your symptoms.



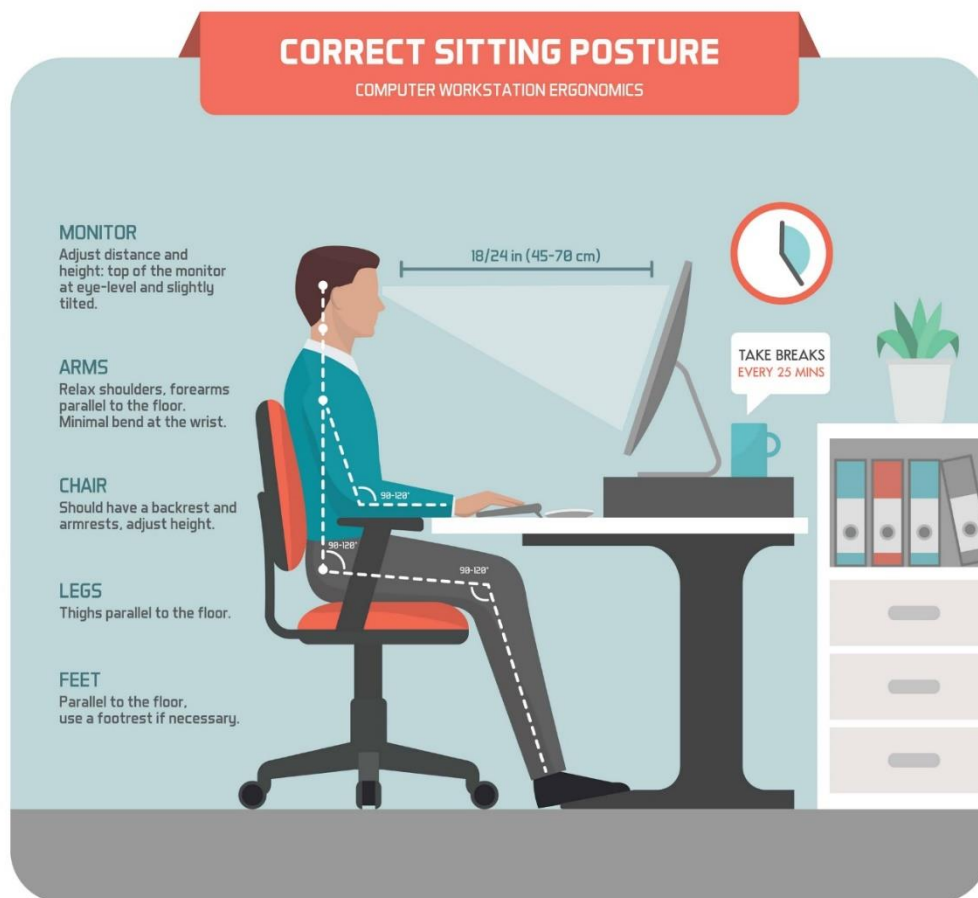
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## How to fix bad posture at work.

A lot more of us are working at home these days, meaning we're spending more time stationed at incorrectly set-up workspaces.

If it's for a short time, that's not such a big deal. You don't have to be in great posture all the time. But if people don't have a good work-from-home setup and they're in poor posture for the majority of their time, that's not a great place to be.





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To reduce the effects of bad posture while working, try to vary your positions regularly during the day, and stand up or move every 30 minutes. It could be as simple as standing up while you're taking a phone call or video conference.

## **Tips and Tricks.**

When seated, try to keep your knees and hips level, your feet flat on the ground (or on a footrest, if need be), and your back straight. Roll up a towel and place it on the seat at your lower back for additional support.

Finally, simply making yourself more aware of how you're positioned at your workstation can be powerful in easing bad posture symptoms.

A lot of people sit in a less-than-ideal position but don't realise it. Becoming more aware can be as simple as having a family member or a colleague take a photo of you side-on while sitting at your workstation, then sticking that to the wall in front of your desk as a reminder.

*Please note:* The tips throughout this article serve as broad information and should not replace any advice you have been given by your medical practitioner.

