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Body Alignment

Alignment refers to how the head, shoulders, spine, hips, knees and ankles relate and line up with one another. Proper body alignment puts less stress on the spine and helps you have good posture. Good posture supports good health. It can help prevent excess strain on your joints, muscles and spine.

Good posture



Good posture

- ▶ Your spine should have natural curves in and not be completely straight.
- ▶ Your head should be a natural extension of your spine, with your ears aligned with your shoulders.
- ▶ Keep your sternum bone lifted, with your shoulders relaxed so your palms are touching the outsides of your thighs, not the front of your thighs.

Good posture (continued)

- ▶ Engage your torso. Think “tall” and feel as if you are balancing a cup of water on your head.
- ▶ Keep your knees soft, not fully extended or locked out.
- ▶ You should feel all four corners of your feet on the floor.

Poor posture



Poor posture

Poor posture can cause Forward Head Posture. This is an imbalance of muscles of the neck, shoulders and upper back. Poor posture can lead to headaches, neck and upper back pain, knee, hip and foot pain, shoulder pain, jaw pain, and fatigue and breathing problems.

Poor posture (continued)

Some behavioral actions causing forward head posture include sleeping with your head elevated too high on pillows, extended computer use, extended cellphone use, prolonged driving and incorrect breathing habits.

Chin tucks – Exercise 1



Chin tucks – Instructions*

- 1.** Begin by tucking your chin to your chest. You should feel your neck lengthening. Do not push your head back horizontally.
- 2.** Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- 3.** Perform 2 to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Pelvis tilt – Exercise 2



Pelvis tilt – Instructions*

1. Start by standing with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, and with a neutral spine and shoulders down.
2. Place hands on hip bones to feel your pelvis rock like a cradle.
3. Posterior Pelvic Tilt – Rotate your pelvis in a counter-clockwise position. The back will flatten out and your glutes will tuck under.

Pelvis tilt – Instructions* (continued)

4. Anterior Pelvic Tilt – Rotate your pelvis in a clockwise position. Your low back will arch and push your belly out.
5. Continue to rock between posterior and anterior pelvic tilt moving slowly. Perform 2 to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Wall angel – Exercise 3



Wall angel – Instructions*

1. Stand against wall with feet about 4" to 6" away from the wall and knees slightly bent. Stand in neutral spine with glutes and shoulder blades against the wall. The entire spine is not against the wall. There should be a small gap between the lower back and the wall.

Wall angel – Instructions* (continued)

2. Arms are slightly bent, next to your side with palms facing forward.
3. Keeping ribs and shoulders down, gently slide arms up the wall as high as possible, pause, and then return to starting position.
4. Perform 2 to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Shoulder roll – Exercise 4



Shoulder roll – Instructions*

1. Begin in a seated position with feet and knees slightly wider than your hips.
2. Arms are by the side comfortably.
3. Roll your shoulders to the back while rotating your arms so thumbs are pointing back.

Shoulder roll – Instructions* (continued)

4. Hold the position for 5 to 10 seconds and then return to starting position.
5. Perform 2 to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Healthy posture tips while sitting

- ▶ Keep your feet on the floor or on a footrest, if they don't reach the floor.
- ▶ Don't cross your legs. Your ankles should be in front of your knees.
- ▶ Keep a small gap between the back of your knees and the front of your seat.

Healthy posture tips while sitting (continued)

- ▶ Your knees should be at or below the level of your hips.
- ▶ Adjust the backrest of your chair to support your low- and mid-back or use a back support.
- ▶ Relax your shoulders and keep your forearms parallel to the ground.
- ▶ Avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time.

Healthy posture tips while standing

- ▶ Bear your weight primarily on the balls of your feet.
- ▶ Keep your knees slightly bent.
- ▶ Keep your feet about shoulder-width apart.
- ▶ Let your arms hang naturally down the sides of the body.
- ▶ Stand straight and tall with your shoulders pulled backward.
- ▶ Tuck your stomach in.

Healthy posture tips while standing (continued)

- ▶ Keep your head level – your earlobes should be in line with your shoulders. Do not push your head forward, backward or to the side.
- ▶ Shift your weight from your toes to your heels, or one foot to the other, if you have to stand for a long time.
- ▶ While standing in one place for more than a few minutes, put one foot up on a stool. Switch to the other foot every so often.

**Exercise is not without its risks, and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. They include but are not limited to: risk of injury, aggravation of a pre-existing condition, or adverse effect of over-exertion such as muscle strain, abnormal blood pressure, fainting, disorders of heartbeat, and very rare instances of heart attack. To reduce the risk of injury, before beginning this or any exercise program, please consult a health care provider for appropriate exercise prescription and safety precautions. The exercise instruction and advice presented are in no way intended as a substitute for medical consultation. GEHA® disclaims any liability from and in connection with this program. As with any exercise program, if at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately and consult a physician.*



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