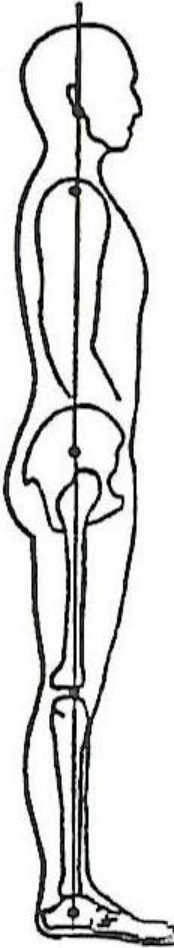


STANDING POSTURE

Standing posture should be a relaxed, balanced position. It is helpful to think of lengthening the body and spine. It is also helpful to think that the shoulders feel broad as opposed to the pinched-back position of a military posture. The following instructions will help you improve your posture by being aware of your feet (base of support), then progressing to knees, trunk, shoulders and finally head position. Keep in mind this handout is about lining up bones, not contracting muscles.



- 1) **FEET:** Notice how you weight bear on your feet. Is your weight on your heels, or on the balls of your feet? Your weight should feel like it is evenly distributed between the balls and the heels, or over your arches.
- 2) **KNEES:** Your knees should not be locked back. They should feel relaxed, and may feel *slightly* bent.
- 3) **TRUNK:** Put one hand on your chest and one hand below your waist. Line up both hands vertically. If you have been used to having your chest farther back than your abdominal area, you will feel as though you are going to fall forward. It is a point of balance. It takes approximately two weeks to get used to this new position.
- 4) **SHOULDERS:** Your shoulders are like a yolk that fits over your ribcage. Instead of just pinching your shoulders back, lift and bring back your shoulders, rotate your arms with palms forward, and then relax your shoulders down. Wait about 15 seconds for your postural muscles between the shoulder blades to kick in. Finally, relax your arms from the elbows down. Your shoulders should feel broad and relaxed.
- 5) **HEAD:** Think of lifting the top back of your head up, and pulling your chin slightly in. It may help you to think of a string pulling up from the top back of your head. This should feel light and easy, and not forced.

Although this corrected position may feel stiff and awkward at first, you need to give yourself time to adjust to the new position. Do not force it, but regularly try to improve your standing posture. You may notice new areas of pain in the upper back. This should go away in approximately two weeks. Good posture should feel “up” and light, and convey confidence! Think “stand tall”!

*Ref: Physical Therapists Gregory and Vicky Johnson
The Institute of Physical Art: BACK EDUCATION & TRAINING*