

POSTURE MATTERS



**The New Guidebook
To Vibrant Health,
Longevity, And
Maximized
Potential**

DR. TIM ERRINGTON



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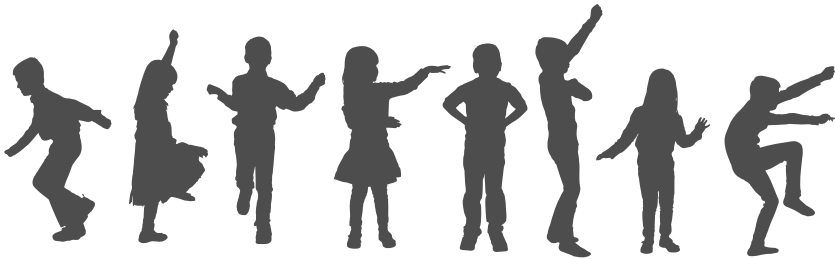
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“POSTURE SHAPES LIVES”



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**“Let others lead
small lives,
but not you.
Let others argue
over small things,
but not you.
Let others cry
over small hurts,
but not you.
Let others leave
their future in someone
else’s hands,
but not you.”**

—Jim Rohn

FOREWORD

I am honored to write this foreword for *Posture Matters*. My friend, Dr. Tim Errington, has written a very insightful and comprehensive guide that is a perfect blend of scientific research and personal experience. Tim covers a topic that is very close to my own heart, which is that we are not victims of our own posture and health, but that our posture and health is a manifestation of the daily decisions we make about ourselves.

What Tim teaches us in *Posture Matters* is that we can use what we know about our posture as a form of feedback to teach us whether or not we are making the right decisions for ourselves, and how we can make changes to better improve our health, productivity, wellbeing and ultimately our happiness.

In his own practice, Tim doesn't only focus on practicing spinal adjustments typically associated with chiropractic healthcare but rather, chooses a more holistic approach of treating the whole person. Many of his insights within this book are based on real-life experiences from treating thousands of patients over the years. What I really enjoyed about this book is how he backs up those insights with tangible scientific research.

Posture Matters offers simple, practical options that will not only help improve your posture but will dramatically improve your vitality, resilience, and energy; all leading to greater wellbeing, productive capacity, and happiness.

Posture matters for everyone no matter if you are a stay-at-home parent, student, executive, or athlete.

Marcel Daane

Author of *Headstrong Performance –
Improve Your Mental Performance With Nutrition,
Exercise, and Neuroscience*
www.MarcelDaane.com



**“The only person
you are destined
to become is
the person you
decide to be.”**

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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I would like to express my very great appreciation to those who helped me see this project through to completion. Most specifically, my amazing wife, Vanessa, not only for encouraging me and covering for me when I went missing for hours, but also for putting up with me for the last 15 years, following me around the world, and sharing my adventures in life. Thank you for your love and support and all those sacrifices, which have largely gone unacknowledged. I am truly blessed that you chose to share my mission in life; your love and strength makes everything I do possible.

Of course, I must mention our beautiful twins, Henry and Sophia. Thank you for keeping me laughing, even when times have been dark. You provide me with love and cuddles, and inspire me to keep going. For you, I will never cease in my mission to make this world a safer, healthier place.

To my sister, Fiona, one of the most talented, highly educated physiologists and physical therapists one could meet. I know the thousands of patients you've nurtured back to health will all agree, you are a very special person. Thanks, Fi, for everything you've done for the family throughout this very tough year. You are truly amazing!

And I must also mention my wonderful father, John Ness Errington, who, unfortunately, did not survive to see me complete this particular project. Dad, I dedicate this book to your memory. I love you and miss you. For what you have given me and for the sacrifices you have made, I just burst with gratitude. You laid the foundations for everything, and simply could not have done a better job. You will stay with me forever.

To my patients, the wonderful souls who entered my life under a myriad of circumstances, thank you for putting your trust in me. You have inspired me to better myself each day, and as a doctor and therefore teacher, I would be nothing without you.

Whilst on my journey in life, I have been fortunate enough to have been exposed to many incredibly talented, caring teachers. I hold an enormous respect for those true health practitioners from all persuasions, especially those advocating natural, holistic approaches, who have dedicated their lives to helping others. I salute those brave and strong enough to stand up and be counted. I especially want to acknowledge that wonderful chiropractic institution of learning, Life Chiropractic College West, in California. They say you never forget a great teacher and that is so true. Thank you, Dr. Clum and Dr. Hawkins; you made the experience truly special.

A special mention must also go to Drs. Christophe Savoure and Matthew Bailey because, without you, I almost certainly wouldn't have become a Doctor of Chiropractic. I so enjoyed those early days, those long evenings in Newcastle debating chiropractic philosophy whilst exploring the virtues of red wine. Thanks for being there just at the right time.

And Drs. Mark Hudson and Marco Bony in Spain for your support, energy, and direction; you have no idea how much you helped me all those years ago. You helped in my transition and made clinical practice make sense.

And finally, a special mention must go to Gerry Robert and his wonderfully talented team at Black Card Books for acting as book coaches and providing the formula for getting the job done. They supported, guided, and encouraged me all the way, with patience and empathy. Without them, navigating the lonely road that is self-publishing would surely have spelled delay and ultimate failure.



**“Ideas come
and ideas go,
but some will
stay forever.
Those that
express natural
laws of the
universe are
destined to
remain for
eternity.
It’s the law.”**

—Dr. Tim Errington

**“Posture
is the key
to life.”**

—Mark Twain

INTRODUCTION

If you had the knowledge that could save literally millions of lives from terrible suffering, wouldn't you feel compelled to spread this information by whatever means possible? Well, that's the position I find myself in, hence this book.

The stark truth is quite simple...
lose your posture,
lose your health!

Posture is increasingly in the news, as is the fact that long hours of sitting is really bad for you. Recent studies¹ have linked sitting to early death, and as a Doctor of Chiropractic, I see the devastating effects of poor posture everywhere. Closer to home, as a father of young twins, I accept freely a huge responsibility to deliver my children into adulthood well-grounded, well-educated, and in good health. Most of us have got the education part covered, but keeping our kids healthy is not such an easy task in this world of temptations and worsening postures. The stark truth is quite simple... lose your posture, lose your health!

When I trained in San Francisco we called this condition 'Silicon Valley Syndrome', but unfortunately, it was never really understood or given the attention it deserves. Now, many years later, the importance of posture is still hugely underestimated. After practicing for 12 years, I am overwhelmed by literally thousands of lovely people suffering the devastating effects of poor posture. One hundred percent of people that develop that familiar 'forward head posture' succumb to some health issue. And for many, it results in decades of degeneration, suffering, medication, and wasted potential. It's such a shame; these problems are so easily prevented. But there can be no prevention until the problem and its scale is recognised—that is the purpose of this book.

When you mention bad posture and its detrimental effects on health to families, companies, and organisations, the response is all too often a laugh and a shrug. It's normal, they say. NO, IT IS NOT NORMAL! It is everywhere,

I agree, but it certainly can't be described as normal. Now, it's time for me to raise my game and teach as many as I can reach, how they can easily take an interest in their health, become proactive, and change their fate.

I am overwhelmed by literally thousands of lovely people suffering the devastating effects of poor posture.

Having worked around the world, I am currently in clinical practice in beautiful Singapore. I see the people here working harder than any other country I've visited. However, I also see a country needlessly losing its vitality, many people living for 30 or more years with terrible spinal arthritis and a myriad of closely-related health conditions. The medical community, of course, gets to work treating the resulting conditions. But unfortunately, they just don't have the time, or the will, to address the real cause of this epidemic. And this is, of course, good repeat business for them.

The empirical evidence I have is overwhelming. After treating thousands of patients in Singapore's Central Business District (CBD), and carrying out postural evaluations on tens of thousands more, it pains me to report that over 80% of the young population are allowing postural changes to negatively impact their health. Even kids are increasingly suffering spine-related pain². Don't get me wrong, this problem is not localised to this little island, it is more a problem of our era. It is worldwide, and it is getting worse.

The word 'doctor' means 'educator', something that has unfortunately been lost over the years. Education raises awareness and increased awareness can save lives. This is my area of expertise and I intend to literally save as many as I can influence, from the slippery slope so many find themselves on. This book will become one of my tools. I hope that in reading this book you will perhaps begin to consider the postures, and therefore health, of your family and question what might lie ahead. You will learn a great deal about your lifestyle choices and hopefully, become empowered to make some changes for the better. Why do I consider myself an expert? Well, structure always determines function; and my previous career in structural engineering provides me with a unique insight into how the human structure behaves and responds to the different forces associated with both normal and abnormal postures.

We all know that we should ‘stand up straight’; we’ve heard it a million times. We can also find plenty of books out there showing us how to improve our posture through exercise, yoga, Pilates, or even Tai Chi. All good advice, but without awareness there is no move to action.

This book is intended to really explain WHY this subject is so very important. We’ve seen the ‘how’, but without the ‘why’ there is no change!

This is of enormous importance, make no mistake. Unfortunately, we humans have assumed the dubious honour of becoming the sickest species the planet has ever seen. If, in some small way, I can help improve the health of Singapore, and perhaps further afield, then this book will have served its purpose. If we can improve the posture and therefore, vitality of the people of this small island, then just maybe we can start to make a difference. Let’s look even bigger. If we can improve the health of Singapore, then maybe other countries will take note. Why not? It has to start somewhere. This is only the application of good, old common sense.

This book is the next natural step in my desire to spread this important information. I’ve purposely made it a ‘quick read’. Please try and get the main points, and if you do, it should provoke some healthy change. Perhaps then, I can encourage you to save your whole family from the degeneration and health issues that postural problems hasten. You can also help me improve others’ lives by passing it on.

Over 80%
of the young
population are
allowing postural
changes to
negatively impact
their health.

Remember, every great journey starts with a simple single step.
TAKE THAT STEP!

Dr. Tim Errington

www.totalhealthchiropractic.com.sg

References:

¹American Journal of Preventative Medicine, Feb 2014

A study by Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital, which followed 92,234 women aged 50-79 from 1993-2010, clearly showed that sitting for long stretches of time increases the odds of untimely death, even if you are doing the recommended amount of moderate to vigorous exercise. 'Sedentary behaviour is associated with an increased risk of the development of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease,' said Dr. I-Min Lee, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

²BioMed Public Health, May 2014

Adolescents appear to have more aches and pains than once believed. Recently, over 400,000 school-aged children were surveyed about their experience with headaches, stomach aches, and back pain during the course of the previous six months. The results revealed that 54.1% experienced regular headaches, 49.8% reported stomach pain, and 37% experienced back pain. Helping children become pain-free should be a major focus of healthcare now that we recognise it is a greater issue than once thought.



If you need nudges and reminders to help keep you on track,
scan the code and utilise some of the FREE resources
that we have made available. Like our
Facebook page for daily hints and tips.
www.facebook.com/TotalHealthChiropracticSG

**“Health is the soul
that animates all
the enjoyments
of life, which fade
and are tasteless
without it.”**

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca,
ROMAN STOIC PHILOSOPHER



CHAPTER 1

A 21ST CENTURY PROBLEM

The worsening postures we see in our children and our general population is, without doubt, one of the most underestimated health issues of the modern age. We should get right to the point here as it is so important. You need to know that in all first-world countries, this is affecting virtually every family to some extent.

It seems that everywhere I look, I see the ‘slouch’ of modern society. Office towers full of workers slumped all day in front of computers, kids endlessly playing games on computers, tablets, and mobile phones. You know what I’m talking about! It doesn’t look very pretty—it drains your health away, hastens your aging process and unfortunately, the statistics do suggest it is probably affecting you already.

The worsening postures we see in our children and our general population is, without doubt, one of the most underestimated health issues of the modern age.

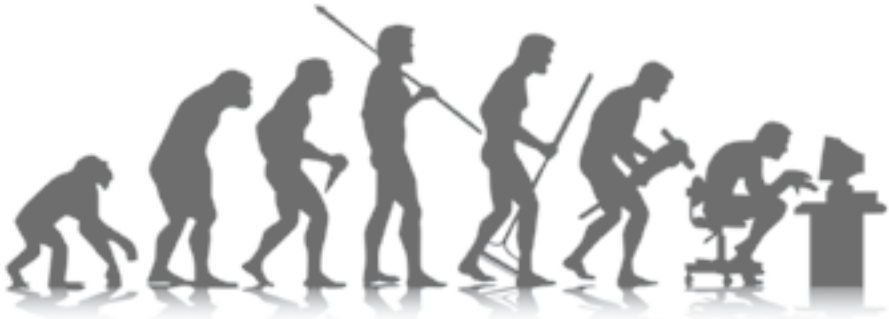
But is this really such a problem? Isn’t this just the way things are? Interesting question, but let us look how we have evolved.

The problem is this: Our genes developed in a very different world to that in which we live today. If we look way back in time, our pre-historic ancestors were constantly on the move, hunting, fighting, and building

It doesn't look very pretty—it drains your health away, hastens your aging process.

shelters. We went on to farm the land and raise livestock. We continued to build and maintain our shelters, and we fought to protect what was precious. We developed tools, started doing heavy work, and developed more efficient ways of moving around. We stayed

on the move. It is this perpetual movement which became vital to our very physiology (how the body works). If we don't keep moving, we don't do so well, and things start to go wrong.



Are we De-evolving?

Things started to change with the Industrial Revolution as production started to get really organised. However, it was the twentieth century that brought the monumental shift. Technology has now changed everything. Cars and planes move us about, and telephones enable us to communicate effortlessly. Labour-saving devices and entertainment centres dominate our homes, and automation and computer technology have transformed the workspace. For many, our home life is spent sitting, eating, or slouched on the sofa watching TV, whilst our working life is mostly computer-based, and our transport to and fro is by car or public transport. Not much movement there.

Pretty much the only thing that has remained constant throughout time is the gravitational field in which we live. What we will see is that it is our movement through gravity that keeps us healthy.

In an important book by Dr. Joan Vernikos, the former Director of National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Life Sciences Division, entitled, *Sitting Kills, Moving Heals*, she applies her ground-breaking NASA research on 'Gravity Deprivation Syndrome' to peoples' health here on Earth. She explains how we need to constantly move through gravity to stay strong and healthy. In the zero gravity of space, astronauts' muscles and bones atrophy, becoming weaker and weaker, as if they were aging rapidly. Vernikos goes on to show how sitting all day at the desk is just like being in zero gravity. You are not moving through gravity, and I'm afraid, this is a major reason many of you are suffering similar degeneration. We are designed to be far more active than our modern lifestyle demands, and without enough movement, our health suffers terribly.

We are designed to be far more active than our modern lifestyle demands, and without enough movement, our health suffers terribly.

Now, we are experiencing the downside of all this convenient modern living, and we see that the diseases of our modern era are at epidemic proportions. Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and other degenerative conditions already tragically afflict 80% of the population, and there is no sign of a reversal in this trend. Yes, I'm talking about the vast majority of ordinary people, people just like you. The statistics are not on your side. Chances are that, without a change of direction, you too will succumb to one or more of these terrible conditions. What about your children? Many of the kids I see in my clinic simply don't stand a chance. Their lives are so artificial and far removed from healthy 'balance'.

So, the two big problems are the postures we are adopting and the lack of movement. Look at your posture right now. What do you see?

When I first encountered this condition back in the '90s in Northern California, there were some in my profession who called it 'Silicon Valley Syndrome'. Now, it is certainly a worldwide problem. I've seen it called, 'text neck', 'tech neck', 'computer posture', or 'hunchback', but it's all semantics. They are all basically the same thing and it is everywhere you look. Chances are... you've got it too!

Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and other degenerative conditions already tragically afflict 80% of the population.

So what ARE we talking about here? Well, we are talking about the head coming forward of the shoulders, and we are talking about slouching. We're talking about sitting at a computer all day, using mobile phones and tablets whenever possible, and then, of course, we have our sofa time, when we collapse exhausted at the end of the day. I know that sounds familiar to most of you, and if it does, chances are that you know exactly what I'm talking about. Now, let's see how it feels.

Your neck is often stiff and painful and your shoulders are tight. I'm not talking about your shoulder joint itself, but that bit on the top edge of your shoulder blade, that bit you feel the need to massage and rub all the time. Something is just not right. How about between the shoulder blades, do you feel the burning? And then there is the numbness and tingling that sometimes spreads down your arm? The lower back gets a bit achy too, from time to time, doesn't it? But, don't worry, everyone else feels the same, so it must be OK, right? **WRONG!** Pain and discomfort is simply your body telling you that something **IS** wrong and if you continue ignoring it, something really bad is going to happen.

The aching does improve a bit during the weekend, but on Monday, back at your workstation, you just know it's coming back with a vengeance. Oh no, is this what it's like to feel old?

They say that 40 is the new 30; so why, at 30 years old, do you sometimes feel 60? And just why can't you turn your neck like before? And those recurring headaches, the ones that the general practitioner (GP) says are 'stress or tension'; are they getting worse? Why isn't the Ibuprofen cutting it anymore?

What about function? That's being lost too, I'm afraid. Is it becoming harder to pull something over your head, perhaps your polo or a sweater, or maybe that bra strap is starting to cause problems? What about reversing the car?

Well, welcome to the working life in most modern cities. You will know whether this applies to you as your body will be telling you so. Your pain does go with those 12-hour working days, and it **IS** telling you something.

Is it stress? That's what they tell you it is. Seemingly, we can't control the aches and pains, so they are dismissed as something non-tangible, an annoyance that you must live with. Well, you've been misinformed. It IS stress, but not the type of stress you were thinking about. It's actually physical stress mostly, and the greatest stress on your body is the physical stress of gravity acting on a slouching spine.

The greatest stress on your body is the physical stress of gravity acting on a slouching spine.

Of course, the other twenty-first century stresses in your life don't help—public transport, traffic, parking charges, neighbours, taxis, politics, taxes, utilities, construction, your family, their kids, your kids, you name it... they all contribute. And yes it is official, people in Singapore work the longest hours in the world (Singapore Ministry of Manpower, June 2015).

Did you know, there are tribes around the world living long, vibrant lives, whilst suffering virtually no arthritis, heart disease, nor cognitive decline? They happily live as communities with great purpose, close to nature. They have a healthy plant-based diet, and are continually on the move, never relaxing on sofas or working at desks. Their postures are strong, erect, and proud—very far removed from the stressed, stiff, arthritic city-dwellers of the more advanced world.

**“Ninety percent or more of all disease
is caused by stress.”**

—World Health Authority

Back in this advanced world of ours, we find that STRESS IS CUMULATIVE, and gradually, something seems to tip you over the edge. Please read on because by adopting the right mindset and taking some simple action steps, you can move yourself back towards balance, and thereby enjoy that long vibrant life that YOU deserve.

**“Every human
being is author
of his own health
or disease.”**

—Buddha



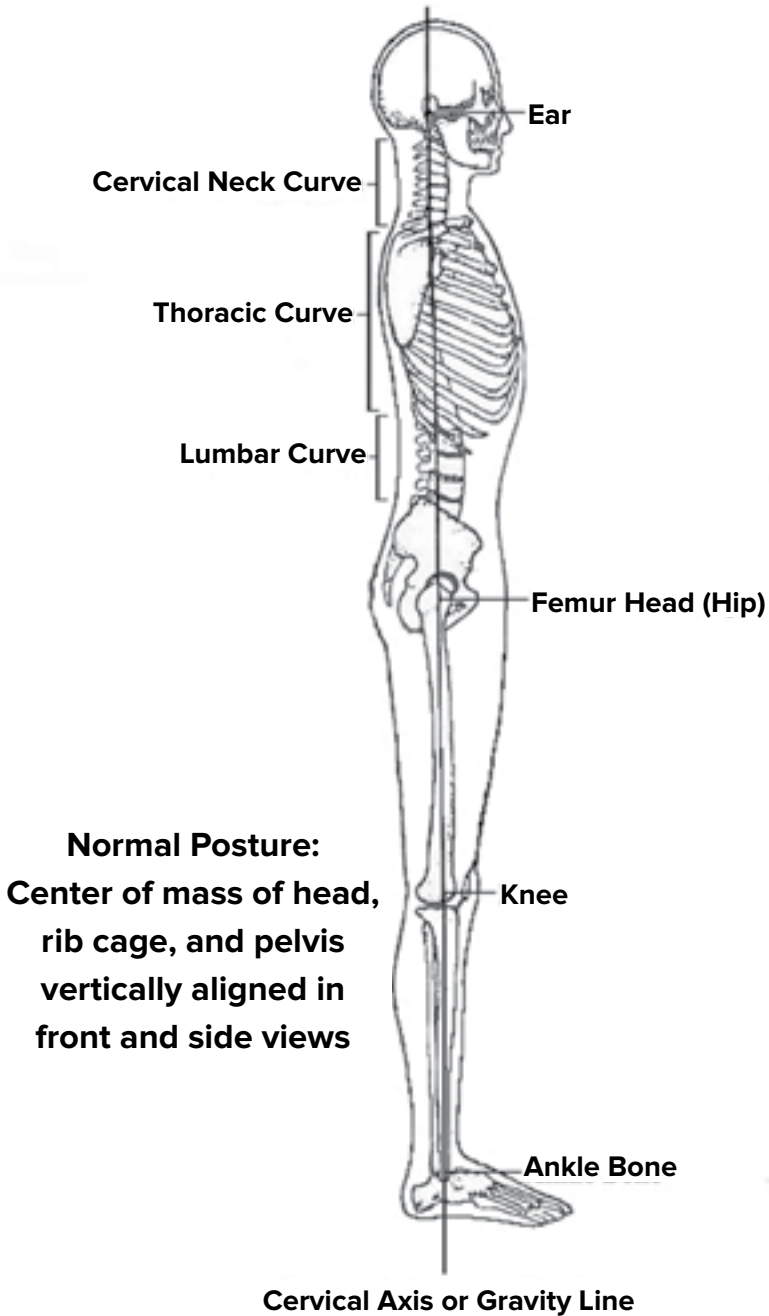
CHAPTER 2

THE NATURAL LAWS OF POSTURE

The Anatomy Of Good Posture

If we are going to talk about maintaining or restoring good posture, then of course, we need to have an idea of what it looks like.

Take a look at the diagram on the next page. Your back or spine, seen from the front as a column, should of course be straight if it is to be strong. From the side, for important functional reasons, it should have three natural curves, a forward neck (cervical) curve, a backward upper and mid back (thoracic) curve and a forward low (lumbar) curve. When you are holding yourself in good posture, these three curves are balanced on top of each other in perfect alignment, about a central axis or central gravity line. Maintain this shape and you will stay structurally efficient and healthy.



Why Is Maintaining Good Posture So Important?

You've probably heard it a thousand times—'sit up straight, don't slouch, straighten your back!' But just why is it so very important that I'm writing a book about it? Well, it's very straightforward, really. Such a simple thing as your posture can absolutely destroy your

Such a simple thing as your posture can absolutely destroy your health.

health. In fact, for many of you, the destructive forces are already hard at work reshaping your future health. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* described posture as the '800-pound gorilla' when it comes to health and wellness. But there's much, much more to it than that. It's also key for looking good, commanding respect, and feeling confident.

These are, of course, desirable traits that elude the majority. I think it is fair to say, and I'm sure you will agree, that health IS the most important thing we have. Just ask anyone with cancer or who is riddled with arthritis. You may not acknowledge it, but nevertheless, it IS true.

Now, to really understand the importance of posture, we have to get a little technical. Try and stay with me, as once you 'get' this, it'll help you make the right changes. I'm not going to try and cover every aspect of posture as it relates to health; that would become an enormous textbook. But as we discuss the following aspects, you will come to see that your posture will affect every one of your 40 trillion cells.

**“Sickness is the vengeance of nature
for the violation of her laws.”**

—Charles Simmons,
novelist

Gravitational Biology

This is the major concept of how the body operates in, and adapts to, the forces of gravity.

Remember from the last chapter—I said that it is our relationship with gravity that is the important thing. Most children understand the basic engineering principles of the spine from playing with building blocks, balancing them in columns.



**“Columns that
are built to
stand straight,
are columns
that are built to
stand strong!”**

—Dr. Tim Errington

Of course, the centre of gravity of each block must be directly above the centre of gravity of the one below if it is to stay in balance. If the blocks move away from balance, then the structure becomes unstable and will topple. As with the building blocks, there really is only one arrangement for our vertebrae that is efficient and without stress.

Dr. James Oschman, Ph.D. gave an excellent account of gravity’s importance to our health in his book, *Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis*. He wrote: ‘Gravity pervades our bodies and our environment, and affects our every activity. All of the structures around us—our homes, furniture, buildings, machineries, plants, and animals—and our own bodies, are designed to function in a world dominated by gravity.’

Joel Goldthwait, a surgeon from Harvard Medical School, concluded from what he had seen that many health problems arise because parts of the body become misaligned and organ functions become compromised. During surgery, he noticed that abdominal nerves and blood vessels are under tension in people who are poorly aligned.

For people with neck misalignments, he described ‘stretching and kinking’ of the vital blood vessels that supply to the brain. Heart problems were traced back to ‘faulty body mechanics’ that distorted the chest cavity impairing circulatory efficiency. He also described calcium build-up (arthritis) around the vertebrae, or back-bones, of stooped persons, and was excited to notice that this can reduce as posture improves. Goldthwait pleaded long and hard with doctors to recognise and correct misalignments to prevent long-term harmful effects; but unfortunately, they were already too far down the ‘medical road’. They had already completely embraced the drug approach to ‘treating’ conditions, so his wise words fell on deaf ears.



**BODY
FACT**

The greater the structural misalignment (poor posture), the faster the body degenerates.

Unfortunately, over the years, this has become a recurring theme. Considering posture in order to make the body more efficient and work better just isn't medicine. This is not an area for them to concentrate on as it prevents the diseases and conditions that they treat. It is a fact that if everybody improved their posture, it would seriously affect the 'bottom line' of the drug companies and the orthopaedic clinics, and their shareholders would be less than happy. Yes, 'health care' in the twenty-first century certainly isn't what it should or could be.

When considering your health, my advice would always be to seek several opinions and do your own research. Consider the driving force behind the advice you are receiving. Ask lots of questions and don't accept answers that aren't clearly explained.

I have made it my professional responsibility to ensure that all the patients of my clinics have full explanations of their condition so that they can have a clear understanding of what is going on with their body. Everything should make absolute sense, with enough time spent with each client to ensure they feel comfortable about the process necessary for them to grow well again.

Let us identify the main reasons posture or structural alignment is so important.

Keeps Your Body In Alignment And In Balance

It's a matter of physics really, cause and effect.

Posture really means shape, and if your body maintains good shape, then the moving parts, like in any machine, are more likely to work correctly and last longer. If your structure loses its alignment, you develop abnormal wear and tear, usually referred to as arthritis. So, with good posture, the vertebrae and pelvis are correctly balanced and you are more likely to move comfortably, with minimum wear and tear. However, if the spine starts to stoop forward, it will lose its natural balance and begin to buckle and twist as your alignment is lost.

You should now be aware that the gravitational forces around the spine simply must be in balance. This will be the position of greatest 'ease'. If we move away from this position in any way, then there must be compensating muscle tightness. Yes, everyone with something less than a perfectly shaped spine would become stiffer and stiffer by the day. It's a matter of physics really, cause and effect.

Look after your discs as they go a long way to keep you standing tall and moving freely!

Now, if you are stiffening, there must surely be loss of normal movement. This will cause a cascade of other effects.

**BODY
FACT**

Your spinal discs do not have a direct blood supply. Only the pumping action of movement keeps them alive.

If you lose structural balance and stiffen then there is not enough movement to keep your spinal discs hydrated. The discs become thinner and your spine becomes unstable and will buckle. Look after your discs as they go a long way to keeping you standing tall and moving freely!

As the spine stoops more and more, the abnormal forces become greater and greater, leading to an ever-worsening problem. This is the familiar vicious circle so many people find themselves in.

**“It’s not the load that breaks you down,
it’s the way you carry it.”**

— Lou Holtz,
former American football player

Vital For General Health And Wellbeing

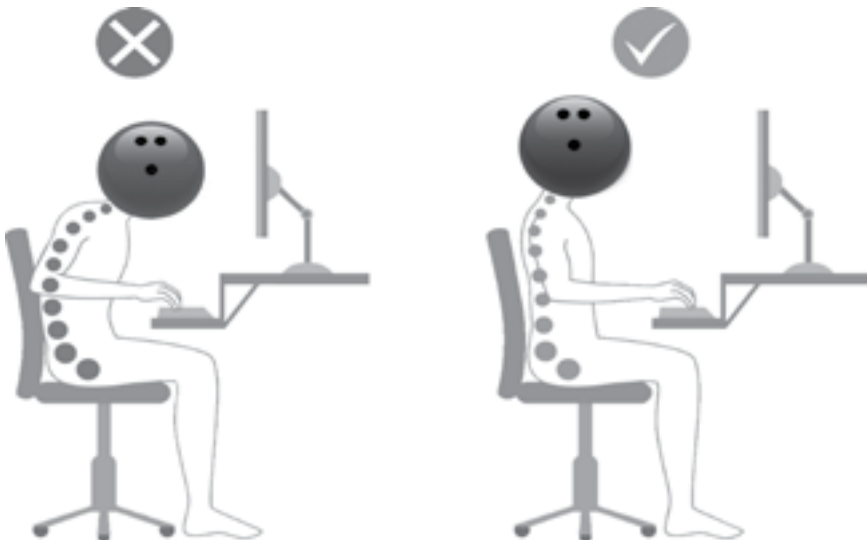
Indeed, there is nothing more fatiguing than poor posture as you are constantly fighting gravity.

There are many reasons why good posture is vital for our future health and wellbeing, and for this reason our body has many regulatory systems that keep us standing as straight as possible. Our bodies generally know what is best, but can become overwhelmed by the sedentary lifestyle and the hours we

spend slouching. As we become more stooped, we become increasingly inefficient and we must use more and more energy just to stand still.

Nobel Prize Winner, Roger Sperry noted that, 'The more mechanically distorted a person's body is, the less energy is available for thinking, metabolism, and healing.' Indeed, there is nothing more fatiguing than poor posture as you are constantly fighting gravity.

Not convinced? Hold a bowling ball a foot in front of you, or maybe a medium pan of water, as the weight of the human head. See how you feel after a minute or so. Well, if you have forward head posture, your poor shoulder muscles are straining and stressing like this all day, every day.



Yes, your head actually does weigh the same as a bowling ball and as you look at the picture, it is easy to see how a forward head posture will cause enormous, and eventually damaging, strain down the spine.

You've never seen a stiff, forward-stooping middle-aged or elderly person with vibrant health.

Your Posture Determines How You Will Age!

Sounds pretty dramatic, doesn't it? However, this is the reality and surely, a great reason to look after your posture. Think about it—you've never seen a stiff, forward-stooping middle-aged or elderly person with vibrant health. They just don't exist. They look slow and fatigued, every step an effort. This is because bad posture and glowing, vibrant health cannot live in the same body. The gravitational forces you are fighting just sap your strength and fatigue becomes your natural state. Just pulling your head back onto your shoulders can make you look 10 years younger. Do it! Eventually, it will make you feel 10 years younger as well.

Take a closer look at the seniors in your community. What do you see? When you see older people doing well, looking healthy, and moving comfortably, they invariably have great posture. This is because the laws of the universe must be obeyed, and a poor posture will ALWAYS lead to deteriorating health. Conversely, great structural balance is easy on the system and we age more kindly.

If you want to slow down the aging process, improve your posture!

Strong Bones And Muscles

To have strong bones and muscles we must continually stress them effectively. The greatest physical force acting on us all the time is gravity, and it is our movement through this force field that keeps our muscles strong. However, it's not just about having strong muscles—they need to be functional, coordinated, and extremely fast to react.

The muscles around your spine, which contribute greatly to your ‘core’ strength, allowing you to stand erect, work by complicated nerve reflex action. They maintain your balance as you move. These reflexes respond continually to millions of different bits of information travelling to the brain from all over the body every second. By constantly moving we are exercising and stressing our tissues whilst sharpening these nerve reflexes.

These vital, healthy reflexes must be constantly exercised, and if you develop chronic tightness due to postural changes, then your healthy muscle reflexes are overwhelmed, obviously causing functional problems.

**BODY
FACT**

As one muscle tightens another automatically releases, meaning that if you develop tightness in one area, you become weak in the corresponding opposite area.

Let’s look a little closer at how these reflexes work. Indeed, the body is very clever because as a muscle contracts to move a bone, another muscle is inhibited to allow the bone to move. This is called **reciprocal inhibition**. However, if your muscles become tighter and tighter because of worsening posture, other corresponding muscles are turned off. This will make sense if you think of your arm. You literally can’t bend your arm using your biceps at the front of the arm unless the triceps at the back of the arm are relaxed. Makes sense, doesn’t it? Have you ever wondered why your back and shoulders get tighter and tighter whilst your abs become weaker and weaker? You gradually become more and more out of balance, and this is a major part of postural deconditioning.

Posture Affects Your Ability To Compete

Having a good shape promotes movement efficiency, balance, and endurance. You may have noted that there are very few successful sportspersons with poor posture. You are structurally stronger, more able

to move at speed, far more agile, and your reflexes razor sharp when you have good posture. Also, importantly, athletes are far less likely to be injured and can sustain long periods of training and competing without damage occurring. The more you train and exercise the better you will get. If you want to improve your competitive edge, improve your posture!

Just pulling your head back onto your shoulders can make you look 10 years younger. Do it! Eventually, it will make you feel 10 years younger as well.

Tiger Woods understands, perhaps better than most, the importance of spinal alignment—having nursed a spinal problem throughout his amazing career. ‘I’ve been going to a chiropractor for as long as I can remember. It is as important to my training as is the practice of my swing,’ he said.



“The secret to improving your game and avoiding injury is maintaining alignment and flexibility whilst improving strength.”

—Dr. Tim Errington

Posture Affects Your Demeanour

There is no doubt about it; your posture affects the way you look at the world. Try walking tall with shoulders back breathing regularly and deeply. Feels good, doesn't it? Now, stoop forward like an unhealthy senior or perhaps a youth who has been playing too many computer games, and walk for a while. Feel the difference? Yes, it's huge, isn't it? Not only in how you feel and how you look at the world, but in how people will look at you too. With good posture, we project poise, confidence, and dignity.

**“A good stance and posture reflect
a proper state of mind.”**

—Morihei Ueshiba,
founder of the Japanese martial art of Aikido

If you want to
improve your
competitive
edge,
improve your
posture!

Consultant psychologist Ingrid Collins describes a close link between the position we hold ourselves in and our 'psychological posture'. She describes how, when we hold ourselves tall, confident, erect, and with our chest open, our brain releases more endorphins, or happy hormones, triggering feelings of happiness. Conversely, when we slouch forward, the opposite happens and the feel-good factor goes away.

Here's my challenge to you. Next time you go into town, just take a look at the people around you. Look at their body language. What are their postures telling you? How many forward-head slouchers do you see? How many hunchbacks? How do they look? Energetic, confident, and successful, or stressed, defeated, and fatigued? Yes, poor posture exudes negative energy, so much so, it can even affect those nearby.

Now look at those with good posture, shoulders back, walking tall. Think of an army general addressing his troops or Barack Obama addressing the nation; they appear more confident, more in control, and show more purpose. This is a powerful posture that people DO notice. Adopt it and it will change your personality, and people will perceive you entirely differently. Remember, first impressions often matter enormously, especially when attracting members of the opposite sex, commanding any situation, or having that important job interview.

If you want to look powerful and sexy, improve your posture!

A Valuable Lesson From My Travels

I remember visiting Panama in Central America a number of years ago. Whilst travelling in the central highlands, I met many local people who spent much of their time on horseback. Although this clearly involves sitting, the gentle rhythmic movement of the upright spine resulted in excellent spinal health. I marveled at the fine musculature of their spines, their amazing balance, and fast, efficient reflexes. These people had some of the best postures I've ever seen, straight, strong, and proud.

I have since taken an increasing interest in the use of horseback riding to provide therapeutic benefits to different groups. The advantages are many and often profound, strengthening and improving postures, providing tremendous proprioceptive input into the central nervous system, improving balance and confidence, whilst of course providing great fun in the process.

One such organization doing this fantastic work is the Riding for the Disabled Association of Singapore, a local charity that provides horseback riding experiences for several classes of disabled children. This is a hardworking charity that does an amazing job and we are proud to be associated with them. They are worthy of any support that may be afforded them. To learn more please visit their page, which is listed in the appendix to this book.

**“The human body
is a miracle.
To not understand
it or to not
appreciate it is
a huge injustice.
See the body as
a miracle and
celebrate it.”**

—Beatrice Chia-Richmond,
ACTRESS AND DIRECTOR

CHAPTER 3

OUR PHYSIOLOGY IN BALANCE



In order for you to truly understand WHY developing poor posture will ultimately destroy your health, you need to understand a few aspects of physiology (how your body works) that may have escaped you. I strongly recommend that you keep an open mind and allow me to help you get a grasp of these simple concepts, as they will help you to adopt a healthier outlook and keep you on a healthier path, helping to create mindfulness that will indeed serve you well.

Concept 1 –Your body is a construction site, constantly breaking down and rebuilding.

To our environment and our lifestyle we constantly adapt.

As in all of nature, we are always in a state of change. Our bodies are never at rest. Both constructive forces and destructive forces are constantly at work, our cells and tissues forever being replaced. With cell death and cell birth in a delicate balance, we are in a state of constant renewal. This is health and this is a miracle of 'life' itself. To our environment and our lifestyle we constantly adapt.

Whilst new red blood cells replace the old every 90 days, the lining of our intestines (incredibly) is renewed every two to three days. We grow a new pair of lungs every year, and luckily for many, we grow a new liver every five months. Our bones are being absorbed and recreated to produce a new spine every 18 months and we are covered by fresh skin every two to four weeks. Of course, we know that our muscles are constantly remodelling; that's easy to see.

Well, what does all this mean? It's simple, really. If all is well, we live in vibrant health; healthy, fresh tissue constantly replacing the old and worn. We are designed for rejuvenation and longevity, and we absolutely CAN work with these forces to see remarkable healing and grow stronger and stronger. Just as life is a process, this reconstruction never stops. Isn't this amazing, exciting even? Our potential for change is truly limitless. However, it must follow, that change is only good if it is a healthy change. The problem is this—what are we growing into? Where is the change taking us?

Just as we can move towards health and vitality, in today's world, we can more easily move towards disease, degeneration and destruction. And unfortunately, we see this everywhere. Is this the path you are on? What are your symptoms telling you?

Our bodies are programmed to adapt, always moving us away from trouble, keeping us healthy. However, if the destructive forces we expose our bodies to are greater than our body's ability to adapt, then we will start to experience degeneration, our tissues will break down, and our aging process will accelerate. The good news is that, usually, we can flip the switch the other way, and pretty much any degenerative process can be reversed.

I remember damaging my knee playing rugby and skiing all those years ago. After emergency repairs, I thought I'd never walk properly again, never mind run or ski. Now, 10 years later, I've replaced my knee with healthy tissue many times over. Those weeks and months cycling up and down the hills of San Francisco served me well. Work with the body, realign the moving parts, restore balance, and nourish it with the building blocks of repair. Sage advice, indeed. That has been my focus and now, healing is complete, perhaps even better than before. Remember, it is not the same knee that I damaged all those years ago. It has been 100% replaced by healthy tissue. A miracle of healing? No, just my body at work, and the constant process of renewal.

We need a strategy for health, and we need systems that bring us back to balance when things start to go wrong. We need an intelligent system that keeps things under control.

We need a strategy for health, and we need systems that bring us back to balance when things start to go wrong. We need an intelligent system that keeps things under control.

Concept 2 – Inside us is an inborn organising intelligence.

You have inside you, an amazing inborn intelligence that grew you from the union of two cells into what you are today, a self-regulating, self-healing organism.

Don't worry, I'm not getting all religious here, so let's follow this through. Our life starts with the union of two cells, one from your mother and one from your father. Over the next 280 days of gestation, there is proliferation of life as the cells multiply, incredibly reaching some 40 trillion in number, as we grow into the most highly-developed organisms in the known universe. You absolutely are a miracle of life, and this, you should never forget.

Now, let's think a little more deeply. Not only did these cells multiply, incredibly, they assumed different jobs. Stem cells appeared and they differentiated. They took on different roles. Some became bone, some formed a heart, some the brain, some became skin, and some built a digestive system. You get the idea. Something was organising all this. The delicate brain was put safely inside a skull, the spinal cord protected by vertebrae. Everything in place, everything as intended. Unbelievably complex regulatory systems, created, constructed, and maintained. All work perfectly, all without conscious thought. Consider our brains: These bio-computers, with over 100 billion neurons, enable us to 'experience' life both consciously and unconsciously.

Incredibly, the brain has the capacity to make more electrical connections than all of the cell phones on our planet combined. That takes some organising. But how? Well, there is inside all of us an unseen, intangible, yet undeniable, intelligence—we can call it our *Innate Intelligence*, and it is the most advanced intelligence on this planet. It is by far, the most important thing we have, and it's about as close as you can get to understanding the concept of 'being alive'. Not convinced? Keep going.

When the umbilical cord is severed, the child automatically ingests, digests, assimilates and eliminates without thought. This is *Innate* at work, the organising intelligence within. It builds us, grows us, maintains us, and gives us life.

But isn't it our genes that do all this? No, our genes are just protein switches that can take us in different directions. They are like a blueprint of possibilities. They can be read in different ways depending on circumstances. And there's more, consider this: When scientists remove

the nucleus, containing all the chromosomes and genetic material, from the human cell, the cell continues to function (based on the study by developmental biologist, Bruce Lipton)! Clearly, the scientists have been forced to admit, it is not the DNA that controls everything.

In fact, when geneticists finished mapping and understanding our genetic material in the ‘Human Genome Project’, they discovered that there were not enough genes to account for our complexity. Protein-coding genes are only part of the story, much of which still remains a mystery. The DNA needs our **life force** for it to produce the RNA framework, on which our proteins are built, and it is only our life force that can initiate tissue repair.

Let’s explore some more into the miracle that is you. For every 20 years you are alive, the intelligence inside you coordinates the beating of your heart a billion times, speeding it up and slowing it down as required. Pumping blood around one hundred thousand miles of arteries, veins, and capillaries, it delivers oxygen and nutrition to your organs, tissues, and cells, whilst removing waste. If you cut your skin, your *Innate Intelligence* quickly recognises the danger, clots the blood, and repairs the damage; any lost blood is quickly replaced.

Whilst you sleep, you breathe a thousand times an hour as growth and repair continues, human tissue assimilated from plant and animal. At a chemical level, 80 quadrillion (24 zeros!) actions occur within you every second. Thank God for *Innate*, can you imagine having to consciously organise all this stuff?

But, wait, isn’t it the brain that does this? Well, who—or what—knew how to build your brain in the first place? And one with such amazing processing power, yet so small, it fits neatly inside our skull? It wasn’t Jobs or Gates, that’s for sure. Not even they could do it. It was not the work of any conscious mind; it was our *Innate Intelligence*, or innate life force, if you wish.

If you really think about what goes on in a human body, and all its intricacies and functions, then the only conclusion one can make is that, only the intelligence that built us really knows how to heal us. Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist philosopher, put it so well when he said, 'While it is absurd to reject medical science, the principal factor in overcoming illness is the patient, and his or her 'life force'. In medical terms, it is our capacity to heal ourselves. Life force is a mystic phenomenon that transcends human understanding.'

Dr. D. D. Palmer, the father of chiropractic, put it very simply when he proclaimed that 'only the power that made the body can heal the body'. A simple truth, unfortunately overlooked by most.

There has been a groundswell of people worldwide, questioning the dogma of medicine. It is clear that emergency medicine is amazing. However, surely until the doctors start to work WITH the body and acknowledge that it is a self-healing and self-regulating mechanism, and that it has within it

The greatest doctor on the planet is right inside you. The name we chiropractors give this doctor is *Innate*.

an amazing intelligence, we should keep our eyes wide open and question the drug pushers. I advise you to ask searching questions when consulting your GP. Heck, the doctor that 'diagnoses' your children's flu can't even heal a scratch. This, of course, is done by the power inside you. The best he can do is to clean and sterilize it, and then apply a bandage.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer once remarked, 'It's supposed to be a secret, but I'll tell you, anyway. We doctors do nothing. We only help and encourage the doctor within.'

Yes, the greatest doctor on the planet is right inside you. The name we chiropractors give this doctor is *Innate*. I invite and encourage you to think deeply and celebrate the life that this incredible intelligence gives you. You are born with almost unlimited potential, but it needs to be nurtured. After all, when *Innate* decides to leave you, your time is up.

Concept 3 – When the body can't re-establish balance, then this is 'dis-ease'.

Any disease is the state that exists when your body loses the ability to re-establish a healthy balance. Remember, our bodies are self-healing and self-regulating organisms, and within us, we have many mechanisms and systems that continually bring us back into a state of balance.

**BODY
FACT**

Your Central Nervous System controls everything. It consists of your Brain, your Brain Stem at the top of your neck, and your Spinal Cord protected inside your spine. Between every one of your vertebrae, are discs that maintain small gaps between the bones for the nerve roots to exit so they can travel to all the parts of your body.

Many aspects of our physiology must be kept in balance if we are to survive—temperature, pH, blood glucose, calcium levels, and fluid levels are all examples of important balances that must be maintained. This regulation of our internal state and maintenance of balance (within a normal range), regardless of what is going on in the external environment, is called **homeostasis**.

Another example would be our breathing patterns and how our nervous system regulates the balance between oxygen and CO₂. Breathing, of course, is involuntary. Imagine having to remember to take each and every breath. What would happen during sleep, I wonder? Luckily, *Innate* thought of this and designed our nervous system to automatically regulate our breath, continually supplying oxygen to our tissues whilst removing the products of respiration. This regulation is homeostasis in action.



“Health exists when the body is able to maintain a state of balance and homeostasis. When the body loses its ability to restore natural balance, then this is a state of disease.”

—Dr. Tim Errington

So, how do all these balancing systems work? Well, keeping things simple, a deviation from a normal set point will act as a stimulus to a nerve ‘receptor’, which will then send a message to a regulating centre in the brain. The brain will then send an instruction to an ‘effector’ to make a change and restore balance. If, for example, the deviation was a lowering

of body temperature, the effector acts to increase body temperature by causing shivering or closing blood vessels near the skin surface to retain core temperature. This process is known as ‘negative feedback’.

The most important part of our regulating system is, of course, the automatic control of our vital body functions. The beating of our heart, our breathing, and our digestion are obvious examples of this. This is definitely worth understanding, and I’ll try and keep it simple. Our autonomic nervous system consists of two opposing and balancing systems. Firstly, our sympathetic nervous system prepares the body for emergency situations, and is often referred to as our ‘fight-or-flight’ response. It increases the heart rate, redirecting the blood flow from the skin and digestive system to favour the brain, heart, and muscles, all to make us more able to deal with the perceived threat. Once the threat passes, our parasympathetic nervous system then normalises all these functions.

These two systems, working together in fine balance, are constantly altering the function of our bodies. Unfortunately, what we will see is that, in this fast-paced, high-pressure world, this balance is very commonly upset, with often devastating consequences.

Our bodies are self-healing and self-regulating organisms.

Another perfect example of our internal environment being held in balance is, of course, our immune system. When bacteria or viruses enter our body, which is a constant threat, they are quickly recognised as unwanted foreign invaders, neutralised, and removed, before they get the chance to make us sick.

What else does the immune system do? Well, remember that we are producing billions of new cells every day as we constantly renew ourselves. This, however, creates the possibility that some of these new cells produced may be imperfect, with mutations that can cause cancer. Our immune system is constantly hunting down these mutant cancer cells, destroying them, and removing them from our body. Maintaining a healthy internal environment, with everything in balance, is our *Innate Intelligence*’s most important job.

So, we have seen how homeostasis keeps the body in balance. There are, of course, times when the body finds itself unable to maintain or re-establish balance. This can be described as a loss of 'ease' in the body, more commonly referred to as a 'dis-ease' or simply disease.

We will see that as we go through life, and especially as we age, one of the principle factors leading to a loss of our body's ability to self-regulate is due to nerve interference, and this becomes one of the main causes of disease. Postural and structural misalignments are the most common causes of this nerve interference and this is the main focus of the chiropractic profession.

Dr. Hans Selye, a Nobel Prize winner and world famous researcher on how stress negatively affects our health, famously noted that, 'All diseases start as deviations from normal posture.'

Typically, we will display symptoms as our body loses some control, a sure sign that something is wrong. Obviously, the only sensible approach in these instances, will be to re-establish homeostasis and balance by restoring the optimum flow of nerve messages, rather than simply attempting to 'treat' or manage the symptoms.

Aristotle said, 'We cannot learn without pain.' I, however, would respectfully suggest otherwise. I'd rather suggest that, unfortunately, whilst it would appear that most people don't learn without pain, the enlightened can indeed learn from the pain and experience of others, and chart a course through life that avoids the pitfalls, the health issues, and all the painful lessons that await the majority. This is the proactive approach to life and living that I am encouraging in this book. As you read on, I hope you gain a realisation that life is a string of possibilities, your fate unravelling before you, as choices and actions determine your path.

For many, drastic changes are necessary to get back 'on track', for others, a little tweak here and there. However, if we simply look at the health statistics today and the trends they show, it becomes plainly obvious that our health system is fundamentally flawed, and our health strategies simply aren't working. You only need to take a walk through the wards of

any ‘modern’ hospital or take a closer look beneath the surface of our city neighbourhoods. Heart disease, diabetes, cancers, and arthritis are the diseases of our time; and sadly, the chances of your family avoiding them are but slight. Is it really possible that a ‘diseased state’ is becoming ‘normal’?

‘The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and again, but expecting different results.’ Apparently, this was Einstein’s observation as he pondered man’s reluctance to change. It is also probably one of my favourite quotes. What we do and what we fail to do, in the name of health, are so ingrained in society. They are not merely habits but a system developed over centuries.

Changing society will take some time, but changing individual lives one by one can start now. Keep it simple. Give your body what it needs and remove what gets in the way. Nurture life rather than treat disease! Become more mindful of the messages from *Innate* and consider their meaning. Become more conscious and aware of the path you have chosen and where it will take you. Respect and live in balance with the laws of the universe, they are set in stone. Be grateful for your life and your health, find your true purpose, become inspired, and thereby, inspire others.

**“Our body is a machine for living.
It is organized for that, it is its nature.
Let life go on in it unhindered
and let it defend itself, it will do
more than if you paralyze it by
encumbering it with remedies.”**

—Leo Tolstoy

**“One of the
first duties of
the physician is
to educate the
masses not to
take medicine.”**

—William Osler,
FOUNDING PROFESSOR AT
JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL



CHAPTER 4

SITTING DISEASE

Angie's Story

Bending forward to tie the laces of her sneakers, Angie suddenly felt a terrible pain rip through her shoulder and down her back. 'It felt like tissue tearing, or as if I was being stabbed. I've never felt pain like that before. It was just excruciating, just awful. I screamed and fell onto the sofa.' Angie recalled.

Thinking it was probably a muscle thing, maybe a pull or a tear, the 36-year-old banking executive spent the best part of the next week on painkillers and anti-inflammatories, bravely trying to get on with life. Clawing at her shoulders, desperate for relief, massages too painful to contemplate, Angie gradually started to think that maybe it was more serious. With a burning, throbbing feeling in her back, simple tasks like operating her computer or carrying a shoulder bag had become practically impossible.

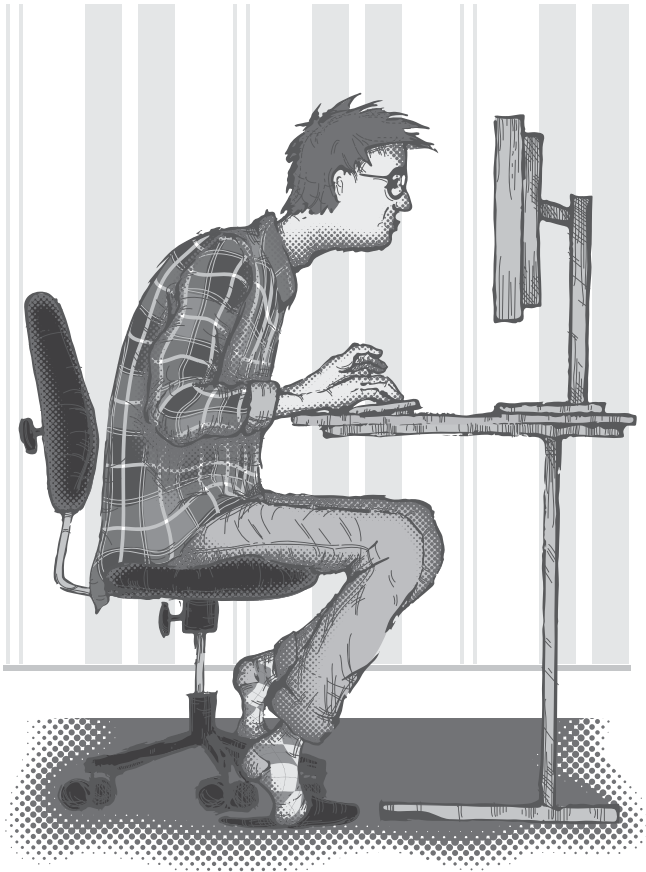
Advised to visit a chiropractor, Angie finally found her way to our clinic. We performed a postural and functional examination and asked about her lifestyle. When Angie was presented with the results, she was absolutely stunned with disbelief. The terrible pain she had been experiencing had not been caused by accident or injury. It was in fact, caused by the cumulative effects of over 20 years of sitting at a desk. There was real damage there and the X-rays revealed their extent.

Angie is one of the rapidly growing number of Singaporeans suffering from the modern lifestyle condition, increasingly referred to as 'Sitting Disease'.

It is not uncommon for people to report that they spend upwards of 14 hours a day sitting.

Without doubt, today's modern lifestyle and work culture are causing most of us to spend far too many hours sitting each day. This is not as Mother Nature intended, and the mounting evidence is creating a very clear picture, that all of this sitting can literally destroy our health.

This is now a problem of such magnitude, that experts are referring to it as the 'Sitting Disease'. This may be a good headline grabber, but the problem is real. And unfortunately, it is not going to improve any time soon as our lives become increasingly sedentary. There are steps we can take, however, to minimise the detrimental effects.



We all know that sitting has become our ‘normal’ way of life, it is easy to see. Globally, it has been estimated that we spend an average of 7.7 hours a day sitting. In Singapore, however, the figures are considerably higher than this, and it is not uncommon for people to report that they spend upwards of 14 hours a day sitting.

This is having disastrous effects on the health of this nation as we see ever increasing incidences of life-threatening conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity, osteoporosis, and balance and coordination problems; whilst arthritis and other degenerative conditions increasingly ruin lives. Everyone I speak to seems to suffer from poor sleep patterns and fatigue, whilst fertility concerns abound. Clearly, something is going seriously wrong.

**“Inactivity is the fourth biggest
killer of adults.”**

—World Health Organization

Not just a concern for adults, children are also increasingly spending more and more time sitting, and this is clearly seen in their waistlines. Parents everywhere find it harder and harder to encourage their children to play outside. Children now prefer computer games rather than running around outside. And postural problems, obesity, and lack of fitness are starting early in childhood.

Play during the early formative years should be extremely active with lots of running, jumping, climbing, chasing, riding, hiding, throwing, swinging, wrestling, and anything else the young active mind can imagine. This is how they should get to know and develop their bodies. Gradually, children should move on to sports and enjoy the exertion of developing their skills and fitness, and even the thrill of competition. I believe there is a sport for everyone, some more physical than others, but all help develop the virtues of physical and mental speed, strength, and coordination.

Why Is Sitting So Bad?

In Singapore, we see it everywhere, in all the towers, workplaces, and schools—a health epidemic unfolding.

Let's face it, most of us DO spend too much time sitting, so let's explore why it is so bad. Only by understanding the detrimental effects it has on our body will the solution make sense. After all, how can sitting safely at home be considered dangerous? Let's see.

1. **The human body is designed to be active.** We have already seen that genetically, we are meant to move much more than what is becoming typical in this modern world. When we are moving, we are firing muscles, burning calories, and metabolising fat and glucose. Cholesterol maintains a healthy balance and the risk of heart disease and other metabolic disorders, like diabetes, are minimised.
2. **Without movement, many bodily functions are closing down.** Muscles aren't firing and blood circulation becomes sluggish. Metabolism all but ceases. And, as active living tissue becomes increasingly inactive, the body deconditions and because of the law of adaption—'**use it, or lose it**'—we see increasing tissue atrophy. This applies not only to our fat-burning muscles, but also to our vital organs, as the heart slows and our breathing becomes shallow. Functional tissue is being replaced by dysfunctional tissue as pathology takes hold. The healthy, vital body is gradually turning into an uncoordinated, sluggish lump of unhealthy body tissue and diseased organs.
3. **Excessive sitting leads to terrible posture.** It is difficult to place all these terrible effects of sitting in any real order of importance, owing to the fact that, they are all predictably disastrous. This book is about posture, and if there is anything that is going to lead to terrible posture, it is sitting all day. In Singapore, we see it everywhere, in all the towers, workplaces, and schools—a health epidemic unfolding. What we also know is that, those who are sitting all day at work are statistically more likely to continue this terrible habit outside of work.

Poor Sitting Habits > Poor Posture > Poor Health

We will see in the next chapter the health problems associated with poor posture, and we will see considerable overlap. It is all part of the same problem; postural problems and sitting are inextricably linked. But please do remember, **worsening posture always results in worsening health!**

I know this a strange concept to many. How can sitting quietly be so bad for you? It is when we are most comfortable. But remember, life is about change and adaption. **Our body needs to be continually stimulated by the forces of gravity.** When we are not using our body, we are gradually losing function—hence, ‘use it, or lose it’ must always apply! As we continually move through gravity, our life is like a constant balancing act, the body continually making adjustments in muscle contraction to maintain equilibrium. This is how we maintain function and stay healthy.

As we continually move through gravity, our life is like a constant balancing act, the body continually making adjustments in muscle contraction to maintain equilibrium.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Dr. Joan Vernikos, in her book, *Sitting Kills, Moving Heals*, describes how people who sit all day, every day, end up suffering similar problems to those facing astronauts returning to earth. They saw that the longer they spent out of gravity, the more the astronauts suffered muscle and bone atrophy, loss of balance and general loss of function; also known as, ‘Gravity Deprivation Syndrome.’

“Our body is designed to live in gravity as a perpetual motion machine.”

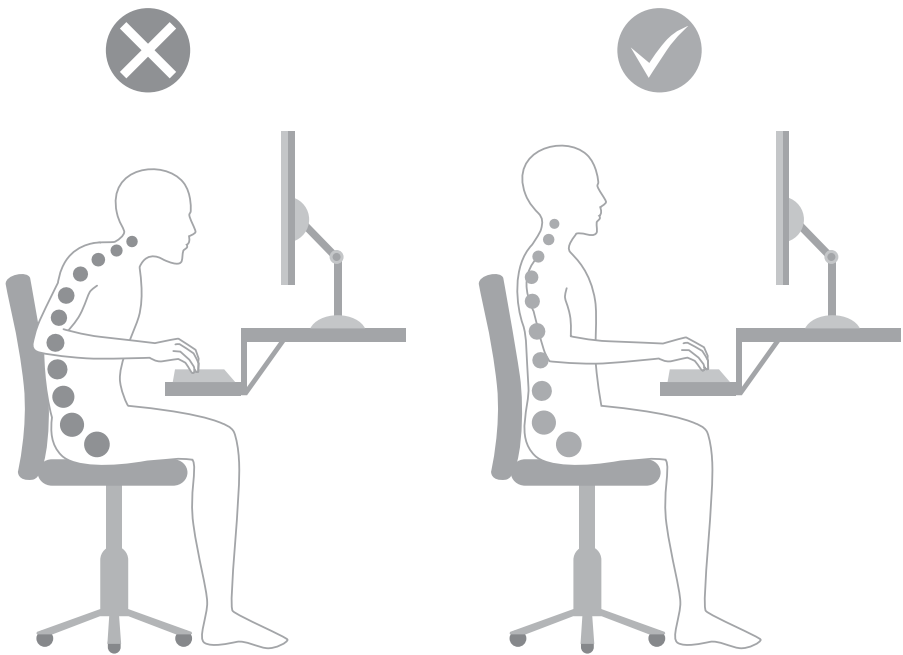
—Joan Vernikos, Ph.D.

A Closer Look At Why Sitting Leads To Disease

There are many reasons why prolonged sitting always leads to eventual loss of health. This is such a serious subject, I'm going to go over a few of them to illustrate why many of us urgently need to make lifestyle changes to prevent this slide into premature aging and stop the onset of a number of desperate health issues.

There is much research ongoing around this topic, but no definitive studies have been released yet. Scientists are still trying to establish an accurate picture of the processes involved.

Take a look at these two pictures. If the one on the left is your posture at work, then, you must make some changes before it is too late.



Metabolic Syndrome Exploding Worldwide

We do know that sitting for extended periods causes the internal workings of the body to become sluggish and increasingly inefficient. In a country where a youngster now has a 50% chance of eventually developing diabetes, let's consider how this may affect the balance between glucose and insulin. When we take a meal, the pancreas should recognise the increased levels of glucose in the blood and release sufficient insulin to help the muscles absorb and use this energy. When we are moving, balancing, walking, and even standing, the muscle contraction constantly uses this glucose as fuel, which must be continually replenished. Thus, the balance of homeostasis is maintained.

But when activity is restricted with excessive sitting, metabolism slows and less glucose is required by the muscles and builds up in the blood. This is what eventually leads to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, one of the most disastrous diseases of the modern world. This is the onset of 'Metabolic Syndrome', also associated with cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, and strokes.

Cancer Increases With Inactivity

Cancer is rarely far from the news nowadays, and two of the most prevalent forms, especially in Singapore, are breast and colon cancers. Importantly, research is showing that both seem to be highly influenced by the amount of physical activity in a person's lifestyle.

A 2010 study by the American Cancer Society found that women who spend more than six hours a day sitting were 37% more likely to die prematurely than women who sit for less than three hours, whilst the early-death rate for men was 18% higher.

It is unclear exactly why cancer increases with a sedentary lifestyle, but one theory is that, excess insulin encourages cell growth. We also know that systemic inflammation tends to be at higher levels, and fewer natural antioxidants that kill the cancer-causing free radicals, are being produced.

The Problem Is Clearly Illustrated By The Statistics

In a 2012 study from the University of Leicester in the UK, Dr. Emma Wilmoth examined 18 studies with a massive 800,000 participants. It clearly demonstrated a worrying connection between living a sedentary life and serious loss of health. The statistics are compelling. People who spend most of the day sitting have:

- 112% increased risk of contracting diabetes
- 147% increased risk of heart attack or stroke
- 49% increased risk of dying prematurely

“Today, our bodies are breaking down from obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, depression, and the cascade of health ills and everyday malaise that come from what scientists have named sitting disease.”

—James Levine, MD, Ph.D. (Mayo Clinic)

One of my favourite studies from Britain was published in 1953, after scientists looked at two very similar groups, London bus drivers and bus conductors. What it clearly showed was that, despite working in a similar environment, the drivers, who obviously sat all day, were almost twice as likely to die from heart disease than the conductors, who were on their feet most of the day.

This is all very bad news for those of us who are sitting all day, and if this wasn't bad enough, it's about to get worse. Most of you will have heard of the dangers of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT), associated with flying. These are blood clots that form in the legs because of the lack of movement and

muscle contraction, causing blood to pool in the lower limbs. The clots cause leg pain, but if they dislodge and move with the circulation to the lungs, then they can result in a life-threatening pulmonary embolism.

Well, it's not the actual flying that is the problem, it is the sitting in a stationary position, in a confined space with restricted movement that allows these clots to form, hence, the increasing concern. If you are sitting all day, every day, then you are at risk. This is just another example of sitting disease, and the terrible toll it is taking on modern society.

So, if you are one of the millions who sit all day to do your work, then please take note. Ignoring the good advice in this book could be deadly. The problems associated with sitting will affect anyone and everyone. Any profession—bankers, lawyers, office or factory workers—it will strike you all. Any nationality, religion, status, age, or sex—the hospitals are full of poor souls, just like you, who quite simply were never told. They never knew and they never had a chance. So now, you know!

To conclude this chapter, I will quote Dr. James Levine, director of the Mayo Clinic-Arizona State University Obesity Solutions Initiative, 'Sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV, and is more treacherous than parachuting. We are sitting ourselves to death.' Levine is credited with coining the mantra, 'sitting is the new smoking'.

**“A man’s health
can be judged by
which he takes
two at a time -
pills or stairs.”**

—Joan Welsh



CHAPTER 5

WHEN THINGS START TO GO WRONG

One thing that amazes me every day is just how few people actively take a real interest in their health. Eight out of ten of us suffer terrible degeneration, yet it takes an emergency to spur us into action. Sadly, for many, there is no second chance! Many of you reading this book will be heading for significant health issues in the future, whether you acknowledge it or not, as will your loved ones.

I challenge you to be the one who steps up, takes an active interest, and saves your family.

How about if I told you that few people actually die of old age nowadays. Now, that's thought provoking, isn't it? No? Well, think about this. If you could help your dearest ones avoid 30 or 40 years of suffering, medication, side effects, surgeries, and a life of wasted potential, perhaps even premature death, wouldn't you want to help them make the simple changes? Of course, you would. So this is where I challenge you to be the one who steps up, takes an active interest, and saves your family. Sounds dramatic, doesn't it? Not really. It has to start somewhere.

Unfortunately, most people live their lives well inside their comfort zone with not too much thought for subjects that really matter. When we hear that most of the things we are told are lies, or at best, inconsistent with reality, it makes us feel uncomfortable.

So we bury our heads in the sand and get on with our busy lives. Being ‘too busy’ is the most frequent excuse I hear from people who clearly aren’t taking good care of themselves or their family. The pressure on our time mounts as we go through life—school, homework, activities, exams... then work, meetings, deadlines... more pressure! The rest of the time is for family and chores. Not much time for exercise, rest, and rejuvenation; not much time for ourselves. Where’s the balance?

When finally, our time is our own, our best years are well behind us and we are already victims of disease and degeneration. ‘It is just aging,’ they say. We have been told that arthritis, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes are mostly genetic, so why even try to prevent it? Anyway, poor posture, lack of activity, toxic overload, and junk food can’t be that bad, everyone is doing it, right? WRONG! It’s a global disaster unfolding!

This whole scenario is a tragedy of deception and commercial greed, but for real people like you and me, there are personal and family tragedies occurring everywhere. At some stage in the future, we will look back and shake our heads and say, ‘How did they let it happen?’

“The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

—C. S. Lewis

As a doctor in natural health, my passion is to help people get back onto a healthy track. If I have to scare a few people into taking action, then so be it. If you are developing poor posture, and by this I mean, forward head, tight painful shoulders, and stooped, rounded back, then this is for you. Maybe you sit at a computer all day, or maybe it’s the sofa, or perhaps driving is your thing.

Mary's Story

Mary is a client who I met last year. I have changed her name to protect her identity, but she could have been any one of the young people I pass by every day.

At 15 years old, this young girl had already been suffering headaches for over two years, popping pills for relief, and at times, hiding from the world. Scans and tests showed nothing 'abnormal', but her back was tight and she frequently complained to her parents that her spine was hurting. Her mother had noticed that her posture was a little slumped forward and repeatedly asked her to try and sit up straight. They noticed that she was constantly clawing at her shoulders, trying to get some relief, rolling her neck, and windmilling her arms because this seemed to help, all but briefly.

By 17, Mary was starting to feel tingling in her right fingers and she was taken to the doctor. The doctor thought it was the tight muscles that were causing nerve pressure and prescribed muscle relaxants. This seemed to help for a while, but soon, it all came back with a vengeance. Massages, acupuncture, and physical therapy all seemed to provide a little relief, but never lasting.

Then one day, years later, after spending many hours the night before revising for an important accountancy exam, she awoke with excruciating pain in her shoulder and her right arm was half numb. She was taken to the medical centre for a scan and was told she had a slipped disc and would need surgery. She was only 24 years old.

After decompression surgery, all appeared well. But fast forward five years to the present day, Mary still has tight shoulders, and the headaches that never really went away, are now more piercing than ever. What brought her into our clinic though, was the stabbing pain below the right shoulder blade that kept her awake at night. And on top of everything else, the pain and fatigue was affecting her important work.

After an examination and a set of X-rays, we immediately recognised what had been gradually going wrong over all these years. Her worsening posture had caused a loss of her natural spinal curves. Her neck was now buckling forward, causing degenerative changes and all that tightness and pain. She was shocked to hear that she had spinal arthritis, and that it was only a matter of time before there was further disc failure and another medical emergency.

Mary, believe it or not, is one of the lucky ones. She eventually found the right help and, as long as she stays on the right path, she will gradually restore her structural balance and with it, her health. She will now be able to get somewhere close to her potential in life.

Unfortunately, too few people are lucky enough to get a second chance in life and health. Most never learn the truth or they leave it until too late. A lack of awareness, and a medical system too busy getting rich treating the side effects, must surely mean, that without real change this will continue. Mary was just one of many thousands of young souls who succumb to the problems brought on by forward head posture.

I see entire generations coming through hunched and stiff, facing eventual postural collapse.

Let's outline some of the more serious consequences that people commonly suffer. I can't list all the health issues caused by poor posture because there's simply too many, but here are some of the worst I see as a practicing clinician.

- **Loss of vitality and dimmed life force**

This is probably the most worrying thing I see, as this can affect an entire nation. Posture is, without doubt, one of the main factors determining health, and I see entire generations coming through hunched and stiff, facing eventual postural collapse. It is everywhere you look, and most people are completely blind to it. Vitality, of course,

can only exist when the nervous system is operating somewhere close to 100%. Unfortunately, as you slump into worsening posture, the increasing tension on the spinal cord, brain stem, and the nerve roots, together with reduced oxygenation, guarantees a life of compromised health.

“For every inch of Forward Head Posture, it can increase the weight of the head on the spine by an additional 10 pounds.”

—I. A. Kapandji,
The Physiology of the Joints, Vol. 3

These are laws of physics that can't be denied. Worryingly, this posture is becoming the new 'norm', and it isn't pretty. Worse still, there is no end in sight.

- **Degeneration and arthritis**

Posture is all about shape and form, and like anything with moving parts, we are going to function better when we are well-aligned. If our joints are allowed to lose their natural alignment, they will simply be less efficient. They will wear faster, degenerate or age more rapidly, and then they will eventually break down. These are laws of the universe.

I look at X-rays every day, and show people the terrible degeneration in their spines that could easily have been avoided. I describe the process and show them how to get back 'on track' before arthritis wrecks their life. They will often ask me how it is that they have never heard this information before. Well, whose job is it to teach you this stuff?

The truth is, that job falls to no one! That's right, there is no one with the responsibility of teaching you how to live a healthy life. You are literally on your own, I'm afraid. They don't teach it at schools, and you are surely not going to hear it from your medical doctor because prevention is not his job. These are the common sense real-life issues that we are just expected to work out for ourselves. The problem is, we don't, at least not until it is already too late. Many of us never do, with disastrous consequences.

- **Greater reliance on medicine**



**“The best doctor gives
the least medicine.”**

—Benjamin Franklin

If you could look forward into your own future, I wonder what you would see. Would it be inspiring and amazingly wonderful, or does the thought of it fill you with trepidation? What about that of your children, what would that reveal? An interesting question, don't you think?

When you have seen as many X-rays as I have, you end up being able to view an X-ray today and see a clear image of what someone's spine will look like in the coming years, given their age and posture now. Often, all I see is pain and suffering and an increasing reliance on medicine, in the name of 'managing' the worsening 'conditions'.

This concerns me greatly because the basic assumption of medical science is that our bodies are weak and prone to illness, injury, and degeneration. It believes that we need medical intervention from cradle to grave, our life and so-called health care being little more than putting off death. This is clearly madness to anyone who thinks deeply around these subjects.

**What the majority are doing in the name
of health simply isn't working.
We need a better way!**

Life Can Really Get On YOUR Nerves

We have seen previously how posture and spinal alignment can affect the nervous system. This is why chiropractic has become one of the fastest growing health professions in the world. Yet, it still remains the least understood area of family health.

Worsening postures
everywhere mean more
nerve interference
and more loss of
human potential.

Worsening postures everywhere mean more nerve interference and more loss of human potential. Chiropractors call this nerve pressure, 'subluxation', but what is important is that you understand the basic facts. Simply put, your body tells the brain what it needs, whilst your brain tells the body what to do. If we develop pressure, tension, or interference on our nervous system, the body simply loses some control in the running of our body.



“All body systems would be immobilized without the nervous system. It controls and regulates every bodily activity down to the workings of the tiniest cell.”

—World Book Encyclopaedia of Science

Retaining clear body–brain connection and communication is of course one of the most important factors in determining your future health.

If you or your family members are going to be able to grow, heal, thrive, and survive, then look after your alignment and never allow bad structural patterns of growth to develop.

In Singapore, sadly over 80% of our patients have reversed neck curves because of activities of daily life, and lack of education. This is causing tension on the spinal cord and peripheral nerves. When the natural curve of the neck is lost, the spinal cord is stretched by 5-7 cm causing a pulling on the brain stem; the bottom of the brain where vital regulatory nerves also become pulled, pinched, and twisted. Dr. A. Breig, a neurosurgeon and Nobel Prize recipient, showed clearly how this presentation commonly leads to all manners of disease processes.

The truth is, old people with a forward stoop are severely neurologically compromised. If this stoop starts at a young age, then you can just imagine how poor their prognosis will be for future health.

The disastrous effects of nerve interference have been known for many years. Dr. H. Winsor, in 1925 (*The Winsor Autopsies*), examined the bodies of 50 people who had died of natural causes. The autopsies revealed 139 diseased organs in these bodies, and in **every case**, they found spinal misalignments at levels corresponding to the nerve supply to these damaged organs! Dr. Winsor noted that it was plainly obvious that the misalignments must have been affecting the nerves and contributed to the organ disease.

What Will Your Posture Cost You?

Poor posture not only causes considerable human suffering, but there is also an enormous economic cost. Lost productivity, together with the enormous cost of medical bills, make this one of the significant financial burdens to be met by families, companies, and countries alike.

Health is declining everywhere, whilst medical costs are escalating. It's a sad fact, but medical costs are now the greatest cause of personal bankruptcy in this so-called 'civilized world'.

One hundred percent of people that develop that familiar 'forward head posture' succumb to some health issue.

Governments around the world are concerned about the aging population, and the pressures this will inevitably put on the health care systems. Where they can afford it, they are building more hospitals. However, even in advanced countries like Singapore, this will never be enough to accommodate the flood of geriatric, degenerative care that will be required. New strategies are clearly needed and must be identified and implemented quickly if the system isn't to be overwhelmed.

People don't yet equate poor posture with financial cost but they certainly should. The hospitals are already overflowing with folks suffering from all manner of ailments, brought on by postural collapse. Without doubt, one of the most important financial investments a wise person should make, is in regular chiropractic care for their family. A small investment now to bring back structural alignment will certainly pay rich dividends throughout your life. Ask anyone with spinal arthritis, anyone who has needed spinal surgery, or anyone who can't enjoy their grandchildren because of pain and stiffness.

Of course, we are living longer, making the problem worse, but we are also developing degenerative diseases earlier. This may be wonderful for the bottom line of medical and drug companies but, believe me, it is a huge burden to those who pay the bills. Do you think that these statistics add to competitive advantage or detract? I think you know the answer.

Forward thinking, progressive companies and organisations are now just starting to wise up to this financial burden and are providing ergonomic furniture and stretching breaks. Some even have in-house health classes and gymnasiums, and I am excited about the prospect of the more visionary

and ground-breaking companies providing in-house chiropractic and other preventative health services. This will catch on more and more, and eventually become the norm in many industries. Let's hope, for the sake of the millions of poor souls slumped at their desks all day, and for the sake of our children, that this day is hastened.

**“So many people spend their health
gaining wealth, and then have to spend
their wealth to regain their health.”**

—A. J. Reb Materi,
Our Family

**“If I’d known
I was going to
live so long,
I’d have taken
better care
of myself.”**

—Leon Eldred



CHAPTER 6

IS YOUR HEALTH 'ON THE RIGHT TRACK'?

The truth is that I worry about many of the people that find their way into our clinics. I especially worry about the direction that their health may be heading. I'd like you to look at your health as something on the move, something forever changing. It is not static; it is taking you in a direction. You are either growing towards health or towards disease, or we could say towards life or towards death. Too dramatic? Not really. Let's continue. To me, it is clear that most people have no real understanding as to where health actually comes from, and most will freely admit that they are too busy and distracted to learn. I feel that this attitude, whilst perhaps understandable, makes my job even more important.

If I ask you what direction your health has been going over the last few years, how would you answer? Is your health stable, improving, or is it declining? Are you healthier today than three years ago? Be truthful.

This is an important question, I think, because statistically speaking, most people are actually moving away from health.

If you stay on an 'unhealthy path' for too long, then it follows that you will end up far from health and it will become increasingly difficult and eventually impossible to find your way back to a healthy state.



There's still time to change the road you are on!

There certainly are forces stacked against you that can destroy your health and ultimately kill you.

I've always been good at projecting myself forward in time and observing what I see of my perceived self. If I don't like what I see, I change the direction to which I am moving. If you think that maybe your health is slipping a little, or you are stiffening, or feeling more aches and pains, the smart thing to do would be to ask the right questions and make any necessary lifestyle adjustments.

As a chiropractor in the CBD area of Singapore, I feel like I'm on the front line of what is seemingly a losing battle. The main problem being that, most people don't even know they are in a battle. Maybe 'battle' is not the right word, but there certainly are forces stacked against you that can destroy your health and ultimately kill you. Now, let's consider the true story of Stephen.

Stephen's Story

Stephen had been battling one illness after another since he was in his early teens. As a 'weak' child, he regularly missed school with colds or flu, and his allergies and asthma attacks were never far away. Unable to enjoy exercise and, of course, eating too much processed food, he developed a weight problem, and at the age of 29, he discovered he had type 2 diabetes.

Poor skin and worsening depression was affecting his purpose in life, and everything he tried was fated to fail. Fatigue, migraines, digestive disorders, and worsening joint pain meant he couldn't make his way in life. At 40, he was a financial burden to his family and on a cocktail of drugs; his immune system completely compromised. What was to become of him? Well, inevitably, heart disease and worse was to follow. Chest pain led to tests, then an emergency angioplasty, and stents in two of his coronary arteries. Of course, more drugs were prescribed and his immune system was further compromised.

Just when things seemingly couldn't get worse, at the age of 46, Stephen discovered that a small, innocuous lump that had appeared in his neck was malignant. Surgery to remove the tumour was, of course, followed-up with radiotherapy and chemotherapy. The procedures were proclaimed a success and Stephen looked forward to the rest of his life. Eighteen months later, the cancer came back in his bones and had spread all over his body. Stephen died last year at the age of 49.

This is a true story, only the name has been changed to protect his identity. Was Stephen unlucky? Was he genetically doomed from the outset? Medicine certainly had a field day treating him, but I ask you, was he ever going to make it? It is now so obvious that he spent his entire life so far out of balance, his body was unable to restore homeostasis, and one thing led to another. Once his immune system was shot, then it was only a matter of time.

Let's look at what was the likely cause of his weakened immune system. Obviously, there was the poor diet and lack of exercise. Then there was the medication, stress, poor sleep, and finally, his awful posture put so much strain on his nerves that disease was inevitable.

There are thousands more Stephens out there, and the clock is ticking. It has become the mission and, at times, the burden of 'real health practitioners' to find and save these lost souls. The established system is not going to get them back on 'track'; there is no 'department' for this.

Watch the miracle of life unfold as *Innate* restores balance and health.

I challenge you to find the Stephens in your world and give them a gentle, but firm, nudge in the right direction. Find the best naturopath, chiropractor, or other natural health practitioner in your area. They will invariably know the right people to help you with the right nutrition, a toxin cleanout, a little exercise, postural realignment, and a fully-functioning nervous system. Now, watch the miracle of life unfold as *Innate* restores balance and health. Usually, it is not too late; all it needs is a change in direction.

The reason Stephen suffered his entire life, and eventually succumbed, was that he spent his entire life with his health going in the wrong direction. Remember, health is about balance, and poor Stephen was never IN balance. He never really had a chance. Now, when I mention this, I know that most of you will know people, perhaps even someone close to you, who also are clearly out of 'whack'. Perhaps, they are 'sickly', often missing from work, and never really appear to be in top form. Perhaps, they catch every passing bug and seem to be allergic to life. I bet they have digestive problems and are already heavily-medicated. It sounds like for them the rollercoaster has started, and it's all downhill from now on. Who's going to hit the brake, I wonder?

I know it would be harsh, and perhaps unfair to say that people 'choose' an unhealthy life of disease and degeneration, as there is no conscious decision to choose these conditions. Indeed, many will have asked, 'Why me?' However, just as there was no conscious decision to

be diseased, there was no conscious decision to be healthy either. For most of us, our lives are so far out of balance, so far removed from the life for which we were genetically designed, that pathology is only a matter of time. Every decision you make either moves you towards or away from health. We must always be looking to restore balance!

Every decision
you make
either moves
you towards
or away from
health.

For some of you reading this, you may be gaining a realisation that it is you who needs to make some changes before it is too late. If that is the case, then good—that is the purpose of this project.

Let's spare a thought for all the health victims out there, all those poor souls shuffling around in pain, and those old before their time. Let's not forget those filling the hospital beds and all those awaiting their 'results'. Remember, at least four out five of us, will end up medicated for some avoidable condition. Ask yourself right now, is this likely to be you in the future? Remember, just like the rest of us, you are a miracle of life and have within you, the intelligence and power that made you. It built you, and it sure as hell knows how to heal you, if only it is set free. We will discuss healing and repair later in the book. For now, let's just think about all the Stephens out there. They say that saving a life is one of the most rewarding things one can do. It's absolutely true. And just imagine if the person you are saving is someone you love! Well, can you imagine that?

**“We can't help everyone,
but everyone can help someone.”**

– Ronald Reagan

How Do You Wish To Age?

As a corrective chiropractor, I slow down the aging process that attacks the human body. I love this job and I love the amazing results we achieve.

One thing we all need to face though, is that time doesn't stand still, and gradually our bodies must change as the years take their toll. Actually, most people will say that time seems to pass faster as they get older. There is no proven scientific explanation for this, but one theory which I support, is that there are less important events happening as we grow older—you know, first kiss, first time abroad, or a new adventure around each corner. The more notable events you pack into a year, the longer that year will seem looking back. So, if that is true, we can slow down time as we perceive it, by packing more important events into our days. But then of course, we must stay healthy if we are going to be climbing mountains, learning to scuba dive, and driving across the continent.

One thing that is certainly true is that people tend to age faster and faster as they get older. But aging is not just a result of passing time. Aging is a degenerative process, and unfortunately, this deterioration accelerates if we don't look after ourselves. It is a cruel fact that some people simply age faster than others. If you look around, you must agree, as you will see an enormous difference in how age is taking its toll on people.

The common denominator of all the folks that are aging badly is bad posture!

When I look at the people around me here in Asia, it is clear that many people are losing their health at an earlier age than I am used to seeing. Many become old before their time and often, I am surprised to learn that some 'old guy' is actually younger than me. So just what is it that is affecting all these people? The common denominator of all the folks that are aging badly is bad posture!

Take a look around, and you'll have to agree. The people that are clearly aging the fastest invariably have the worst postures. So, is bad posture the consequence of failing health, or is it the cause? The answer is that, these two states are so closely linked, they both feed off each other. The worse the posture, then the worse the health; the worse the health, then the worse the posture. It becomes one huge, tragic, vicious circle. One thing for sure, though, is that I have an enormous job ahead of me.

**“Aging isn’t about luck or fate,
it’s a life-long process with patterns
being created all the way.”**

—Dr. Tim Errington

**“As the twig
is bent,
so grows
the tree!”**

- Alexander Pope,
POET



CHAPTER 7

YOUR CHILDREN'S POSTURE MATTERS!

Is It Time For Concern?

Let's face it parents, our most important job is to ensure our children grow up to be healthy adults. This may seem a no-brainer to most of you, but unfortunately, it's very clear that many families get so wrapped up in the pressures of modern life that it gets forgotten. Whether it is lack of exercise, disastrous food choices, or poor posture, our kids are becoming sicker and sicker at an ever-increasing rate.

Disturbingly, it is estimated that children born after 2000 will be the first generation that will not live as long as their parents! Yes, shocking indeed! This is a twenty-first century problem, and it is getting worse. Without any doubt, the future health of millions of kids out there is at stake here.

A strong posture says, 'I am the one most likely to succeed.'

So parents, I urge you to read this chapter very carefully. I want this to be a wake-up call. Please help me to spread the word because no matter how much you love your kids, if you are neglecting to correct their posture, then it will negatively impact their future lives enormously. As you start to realise the importance of your children's posture, and you want to know how to make a start, please turn to the next chapter and review the simple, sensible steps you can start to take.

When you look at your kids, what do you see? Remove the blinkers and really see them as they are. How is their posture? How does it compare with the 'ideal' posture we saw in Chapter 1?

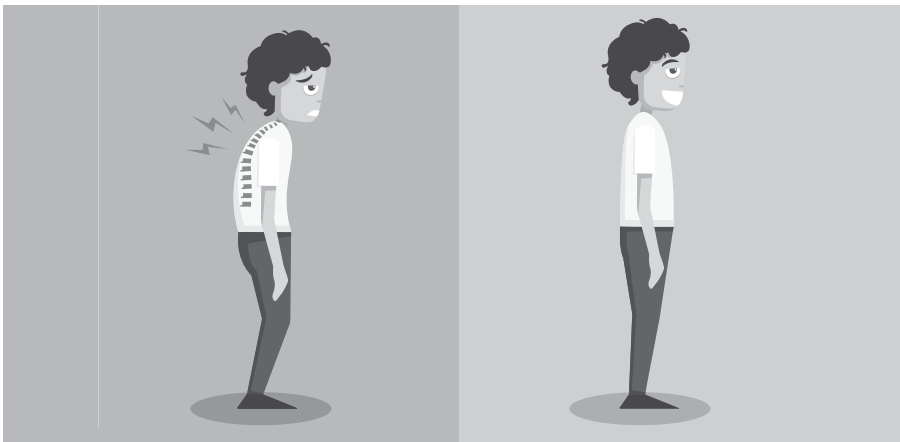
Many of you will already have concerns about your children's posture. Of course you do, like millions of kids everywhere you look, you see them developing the 'slouch' of modern life. You have every right to be very concerned. These are laws of the universe, and if your children are losing their structural balance, then eventually, with it will go their health. They will age badly and never achieve what they might have wanted in life. Sounds dramatic, I know, but so be it. This is real, and I need to shock people into action.

How Do Others See Your Children?

By allowing your kids to develop bad posture, you are sabotaging their education and their career!

We've all heard of body language, well, spare a thought for how your children are going to be perceived in the future as they grow up. Remember, people with good posture are seen as intelligent and educated. Their upright stance gives them more confidence,

and makes them look more successful, thus, they are more likely to get the best jobs. Look at the picture below and ask yourself: Which of the two adolescents is likely to be more healthy and successful in life?



Posture Affects Our Ability To Learn

OK, you parents who believe that the academic success of your kids must come first, this is for you. A strong posture says, 'I am the one most likely to succeed.' And, by allowing your kids to develop bad posture, you are sabotaging their education and their career! There, you've been told, so now, if you neglect this vital part of their development, it's on you!

We all want our children to succeed at school and go on to find a rewarding career. Of course, we do. Well, if this is your goal, then there is absolutely no doubt that improving and maintaining your child's posture should be central to their education and upbringing. Good oxygenation and circulation, together with a healthier nervous system and a positive frame of mind, all come with good posture and all make learning easier. Also, a strong, balanced frame will ensure greater success at sports and other school activities.

We know from a study by researchers from Harvard and Columbia Universities (2013), that people (kids are people) with powerful postures, with straight balanced spines and open shoulders, have substantially increased testosterone levels and decreased cortisol levels, whereas, those who slouch have decreased testosterone and increased cortisol levels. This means, your slouching kids are developing low self-confidence and high stress levels, making learning much more of a challenge.

Indeed, more schools are recognising this, and many are just starting to wake up to the possibilities of ergonomic furniture and stretching breaks. Some of the more enlightened schools have exercise balls available at times to make sitting more active and less passive.

We have visited all the schools in Singapore, providing health and posture checks for the teachers. This has been a huge success. And by teaching the teachers, we are able to reach out to many thousands of children and their families. Some of the more enlightened and forward thinking teachers have introduced brief

Kids will have a very poor prognosis for the future, as we see an entire generation of back pain sufferers gradually surface.

stretching breaks. These have proven to be enjoyable and healthy for both student and teacher alike. Importantly, there has also been a reduction in fatigue and improved concentration.

“It is the job of the spine to keep the brain alert. The moment the spine collapses, the brain collapses.”

—B. K. S. Iyengar,
founder of Iyengar yoga

The Statistics Don't Make Pretty Reading!

As a chiropractor, I can tell you that, whereas previously, we would rarely see patients in our clinics until their early twenties, now we are seeing **seven-year-olds with back problems!** Yes, you read it correctly, seven-year-olds! These kids will have a very poor prognosis for the future, as we see an entire generation of back pain sufferers gradually surface.

Incredibly, a 2003 study of 154 ten-year-olds showed that 9% of them—that's almost one in ten, have degenerative changes to at least one disc in their spine. Dr. Francis Smith, a consultant radiologist and sports medicine physician at Woodland Hospital in Aberdeen, Scotland, who conducted the study, in summing up, commented that, 'we found degenerative changes in the spine much earlier than we would ever have suspected. This study revises our thoughts on when we should begin preventative back care. Proactive steps should begin early in life, even before puberty.'

There are wonderful, caring, well-meaning parents everywhere who just don't know how important this subject is. Often, there is awareness that maybe their kid's posture is not perfect, but they have no idea what it means. Half the kids that attend my children's school visibly have postural

issues starting. When I mention it, the parents agree, and sometimes, show some concern. Mostly, they think I am being alarmist and dramatic, and they retreat back into their comfort zone of blissful ignorance. It's a shame really as **posture can be corrected**, and the sooner you make the right moves, the better the outcomes.

In Singapore, I am desperately worried about the health of the next generation coming through. Because of the sedentary city lifestyle, I am seeing increased risk of obesity, childhood diabetes, reduced vitality, increased susceptibility to infection, greater incidence of immune compromise, allergies, asthma, digestive disorders, cancers, headaches, and migraines... in children!



Does your child look like this most of the time?

Why Is This Happening?

Before technology changed our lives, most people were just trying to survive. Hard work started at an early age; it was physical and required strength, balance, and movement. Our muscles were healthy and balanced because they were constantly being used and challenged, and this gave us great posture.

Parents, it's time to make your kids' physical playtime fun again.

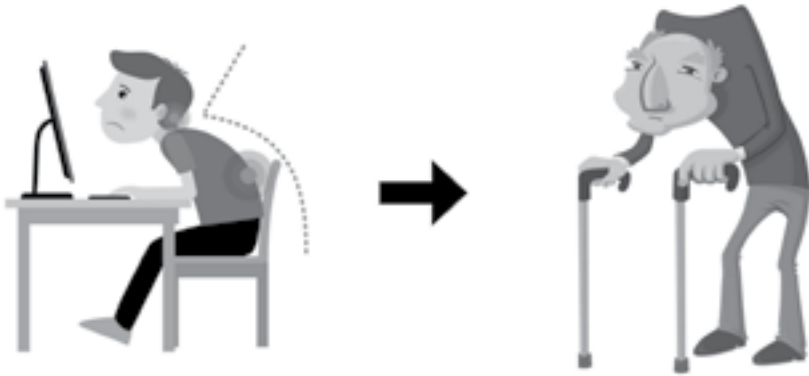
Today, in this sedentary, sitting culture, it couldn't be more different, with our children hunched over computers at every opportunity. There is less physical play, and movement is more repetitive. Our children are less likely to develop well-balanced, opposing musculature and their bodies never get the opportunity to develop as intended. They are less proficient at running, jumping, and competing because to develop healthy muscles, they need to be strained and challenged. Without it, they are far more prone to injury. If they have a life of sitting ahead of them, with their spines bent and collapsing forward, they will become stiff, and even getting around will become more difficult. Being less active throughout life means all their vital body systems will suffer. Parents, it's time to make your kids' physical playtime fun again.

Posture is mostly a learned behaviour. So, mums and dads, if you have poor posture, this is sending out a terrible message, and any attempts to correct your children will seem somewhat contradictory.

As our youngsters constantly hunch, whether at work or play, they are losing core stability, and their bodies are reshaping. The muscles, ligaments, and tendons to the front of the neck, shoulders, and chest shorten, whilst those at the back lengthen. The head moves forward and the back rounds, the muscles of the shoulders and back becoming tighter and tighter as they gradually stiffen.

It gets worse. With their legs bent under a desk all day, their hip flexors and psoas muscles, between their pelvis and lower spine, shorten. This pulls the pelvis and lower back out of alignment, causing instability and increased wear and tear.

If all these posture changes are visibly happening to your kids (take a good look), then they are creating a blueprint for future growth that guarantees future pain, suffering, and accelerated aging. I know that no one wants this for their children, so it's time to wake up and face this problem. The responsibility for getting your kids back 'on track' lies firmly on your shoulders.



*Parents – if your kids look like this they will age like this.
WAKE UP!!!!!!*

We Must Increase Awareness!

I passionately believe that posture is a problem of such magnitude, it should be both taught at schools, and included in government campaigns to raise awareness.

In Singapore, we have an extremely successful outreach program that brings awareness and understanding to as many education institutions as we can reach. If you would like us to come to your organisation and present this material, then see our contact details towards the end of the book.

All these posture changes are creating a blueprint for future growth that guarantees future pain, suffering, and accelerated aging.

Remember, our kids start off with near-perfect spines. It is the postures WE allow them to adopt, that is causing so many of them to end up with these disastrous postures we see everywhere.

A Chiropractor's Perspective

As a chiropractor, when I see a youngster with poor posture, I can't help thinking about the stresses these postures put on their organs and the vital

nerves within the spine. Remember, our brain is the computer that controls everything. It must communicate with the rest of the body via the nerves travelling up and down the spine. All our limbs, tissues, and organs send vital feedback information for the body's regulation.

Our brain, itself, requires movement in the body to remain healthy. Movement stimulates receptors in joints, especially the spine, which fire electrical impulses into the brain. This information is vital for proprioception, or our body's position sense, and it also lights up the brain, like an alternator charging a car battery. Think about it for a moment. You have never seen a really, really stiff elderly person, who is full of life or with a sharp mind.

Nobel Prize laureate and neurobiologist Roger Sperry famously noted that, '90% of stimulation and nutrition to the brain is generated by the movement of the spine'. He went on to explain how unnatural movement associated with poor posture, causes abnormal stimulation of the brain. Obviously then, just as with any computer, with poor input, the result must always be poor output.

Poor Posture And Development Disorders

When we see a child with visible development problems, very often we can notice certain common physical characteristics. Usually, there are abnormal movement patterns and poor muscle tone, together with bad posture.

Obviously, perfectly healthy babies don't develop neurodevelopmental issues without good cause. Also, we can be absolutely sure that the collapsing spine of modern posture is not due to genes or bad luck. When we look to explain development issues, we must examine the common denominators. If our shape becomes unnatural, then our movement patterns become abnormal, then we must have abnormal input into our brain. As signals between motor and sensory neurons and the brain become increasingly distorted, then so does our interpretation of our world. Just observe the gait of a child with terrible posture and you'll see what I mean.

“Parents, if your children are developing worsening posture, this is ultimately not only going to affect their development physically, but also both mentally and emotionally.”

—Dr. Tim Errington

Know Your Child's Posture

Your child's posture is an important part of their health and wellness



COMMON SYMPTOMS

SKULL UNLEVEL/ FHP

Headaches	Recurrent
Neck Stiffness	Colds/Flu
Neck Pain	Concentration
Balance	Sinus/Allergies
Vision/ Hearing	Fatigue

UNLEVEL/ROUNDED SHOULDERS

Upper and Mid Back Pain
Asthma
Breathing
Digestive Problems

HIP UNLEVELING/ SWAYBACK

Low Back Pain
Constipation/Diarrhea
Scoliosis
Bed Wetting



Make good posture and structural alignment a part of your child's health and wellness program

**“If you don’t
know where you
are going, every
road will get
you nowhere.”**

—Henry Kissinger,
AMERICAN DIPLOMAT



CHAPTER 8

ACTION STEPS

Improve Your Posture, Movement, And Balance— Improve Your Life!

This chapter is for all of our clients to read, as well as anyone who wants to help their family live a healthier life and save them from years of deteriorating health. Although this book is more about the WHY than the how, I want to show that the HOW is actually relatively simple. It just takes some basic understanding and perseverance. Once you understand the WHY, then the HOW is easy.

First, get the principle, then the desire, and then find out how to apply simple strategies. I shall explain what I do, what I recommend to my clients, and I'll get you started. I want you to take a personal interest in your health, to get started now, and then just keep moving forward. It will bring you rich rewards in terms of the years of pain and suffering from which you will be saved.

Get The Basics Right

These may seem a little obvious to some, but if you do actually cover these points and act, then that will be half the battle won. The rest will come easily. What you do each day determines your outcomes. So, we will encourage behavioural changes and healthier habits. These new habits will determine your future health.

Make sure you have a real desire to improve the future health of your family – This might seem too obvious, but this is going to need focus, commitment, and consistency. For some of you, it will mean getting your head out of the sand. It is not going to happen by itself. Do understand that only a change in habits and lifestyle will work. This will need to become part of your normal life, so embrace it and celebrate the wonderful years ahead you are going to reclaim.

Change your perception – Get your head in the right place. How you perceive something sets your state. If your perception is that the changes will be too hard to achieve, then in all likelihood, you will give up before you even start.

Maintaining proper posture is a reflection
of your self-confidence.

Take that first step – Remember health is a journey and every journey starts with that first step. Start now. Otherwise, for most of you, the reality is that ‘later’ will become ‘never’.

“You don’t need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

—Martin Luther King

Find a structural chiropractor you trust – Have your alignment evaluated properly by postural experts and follow their advice. If you need a correction, then do it sooner rather than later. Maintaining the correction after will be easy.

Understand the physiology of posture – You must know why good posture will give you a long healthy life and why bad posture will wreck your life. This was covered in Chapters 2 and 3.

What about Yoga and Pilates?



There are numerous systems for correcting poor posture. Yoga and Pilates may be the best known, whilst others, like the Alexander Technique, also have many followers. Proponents of each claim that theirs is the best and most complete system; but the truth is, you have to find what works for you. Each method has its merits. And if applied properly, all will do the trick. If you don't enjoy one, try another. What do I do? Well, my particular thing is yoga. I go, an average of three or four times a week, to an hour-long class and have done so for several years. I love it and feel great all day. The benefits are innumerable and I can't imagine stopping, ever.

Find 'your' exercise system that you enjoy – Do some trial classes and find something you enjoy. I first did Pilates and later switched to yoga. Convenience is vital, and if it is a class that you are going to do, then you have to find an instructor that inspires you. If you can't find time, then take a few weekend classes and practice at home during the week. Make it work, and no excuses!

Become a posture-spotter – Observe other people, their posture and demeanour. How do they look? Ask yourself, do they look healthy?

Learn what normal and healthy posture looks like – Start correcting yourself, and that means, standing and sitting postures, and those adopted as you go about your daily activities. Remember, what you do all day especially matters. Driving, desk-sitting, time relaxing—it all matters!

Learn the biggest postural faults – Be able to spot them in yourself and family members, and correct them.

Think about what you do continually each day – Are you on your feet, or sitting at a computer? Learn how to sit correctly and take sufficient breaks. What balancing exercises do you need to perform to neutralise the effects?

Look at your family members – One generation tends to pass down habits and lifestyles, just as much as they do their genes. I saw my father and understood immediately what I must prevent from happening. He became stooped in his last couple of decades. Had he maintained alignment and core strength, then what a different life he would have lived!

Tell the people around you what you are doing and why – They can help point out when your posture is slipping—keeps you on your toes.

Make a plan – Write it down and keep it somewhere prominent. Refer to it often. Expect to lose your way on occasions; it's OK as long as you get back on track. Postural improvement is simple if you follow these steps, but that doesn't make it *easy*! You do need a way of getting back on purpose when you become distracted.

**“Everyone has a plan until they
get punched in the face.”**

—Mike Tyson

Your Action Steps For Immediate Implementation

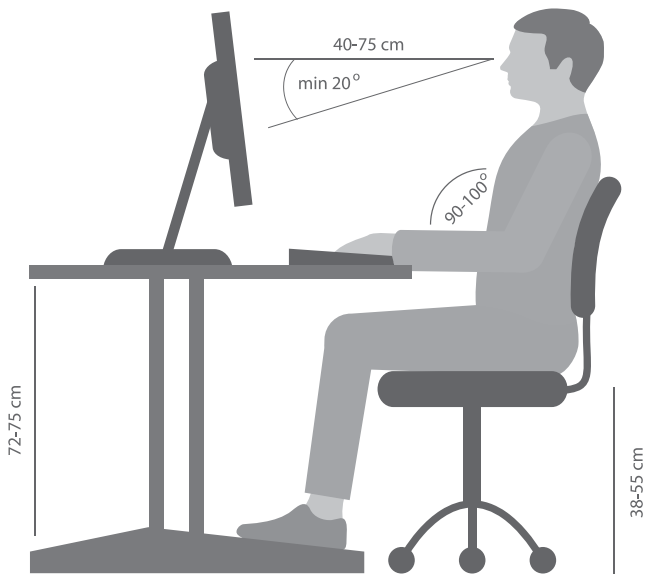
Here, I give you the basics to improve your posture. Follow these simple steps and you will see excellent results. This is a world of action and reaction, so we absolutely have to **MAKE** these changes occur. They definitely won't happen by themselves.

Obviously, poor posture doesn't happen overnight, and correcting it will need a consistent approach over time. There is no quick fix. We need to create healthy structural habits and patterns because, when your posture is poor, gravity will make the situation worse. By adopting the simple healthy habits below, you can slow down the unhealthy changes, gradually stabilising the structure and then move it back towards balance. This is the approach recommended. All these simple exercises are shown clearly on our website.

These are the 12 things I do and encourage my clients to do:

1. **Extension exercises.** If you are slumped at a screen all day, then you must balance this with simple extension exercises. Use a foam roller or a yoga block in the upper thoracic spine. Lie over it and extend. It will probably be a little tender or even downright painful. If it is, it means you **REALLY** need to do this. Try wrapping a towel around it to make it more comfortable. If you are already a bit 'hunchbacked', then remember, this is already **old man's back** or **old lady's back** starting to form. Spinal rigidity is setting in and if unchecked, this will spread. This is extremely unhealthy and may be already suppressing your breathing and tipping you forward into old age. Urgent action required.
2. **Lift your sternum and pull your head back continually** so that it is on your shoulders where it should be. It will feel awkward initially, but gradually, it will become normal for you. Open and pull back your shoulders.
3. **Every hour, perform shoulder-rolling exercises**, forward and back, 10 times, as you pull your head back.

4. **Use a resistance band** to strengthen the muscles in your upper back and neck, to actually hold your head in the right position.
5. **Start improving your core strength.** Pull that belly in. Use an exercise ball often. The movement and instability is amazing for bringing the spine back to life, and waking up the tired stabilising muscle and nerve reflexes that become sluggish and weak.
6. **Embrace life-long chiropractic care for yourself and your family.** It will keep you on track and help you make healthier choices. You will have better alignment and therefore, better function. You will suffer less degenerative changes and delay the stiffening of age. You will have a healthier nervous system, stronger immune response, and better oxygenation of all your cells. The proactive, early adopters in our society are already reaping the benefits of spinal maintenance care, much as the rest use dentistry for maintaining oral health.
7. **Improve your sitting posture,** especially if you sit at work all day.



Here are the basics you can follow:

- Your monitor should be directly in front of you, about an arm's length away, with the top of the screen at eye level. If the screen is too high or too low, you will have to bend your neck, which will cause fatigue and eventual discomfort.
- Adjust your chair so that your lower back is properly supported.
- Your elbows should rest by the side of your body, with your elbows forming an L-shape and your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor when using the keyboard.
- Your feet should be comfortably flat on the floor or on a support, if necessary. Try not to cross your legs as this affects blood supply to the legs and twists the pelvis.
- Very importantly, you should remember to stop your head from moving forward towards the screen, keeping it balanced comfortably above the shoulders.
- Finally, any movement you can do whilst sitting will help keep your spinal discs and muscles healthy. I have got into the healthy habit of rolling my pelvis forward and backward, and from side to side. Learn to read the signs from your body, you will find it is constantly giving you clues as to what is right and wrong.

I recommend a well thought-out ergonomic workstation that works for you. I don't believe there is a 'one-solution-fits-all', but my favourite workstation (I have a few) is a height-adjustable desk with a sit-stand, saddle-type chair. The chair I use is called a Capisco chair, but there are others on the market. I find these are great for alleviating many of the dangers associated with sitting for hours in bad posture.

You need to find a solution that works for you, according to your circumstances. Feel free to visit our website, www.totalhealthchiropractic.com.sg/a-closer-look-at-sitting-posture, for more detailed information concerning sitting posture and good ergonomic set-ups.

If you can't get an ergonomic workstation, put a SitFit® or a balance cushion on your chair initially for 20 minutes a day. This is a small inflatable disc that you can sit on. It makes sitting more active and less passive, creating instability, and forcing your brain and body to communicate to maintain balance and encourage better structural alignment.

8. **Stand up and stretch every half an hour.** Go and get some water or stand to take phone calls. Whatever works for you! When you are sitting without movement, your muscles and nerve reflexes around the spine are shutting down. By standing, gravitational forces permeate through your structure and tissues, bringing things back to life. Standing will improve blood flow and increase metabolism, whilst burning more calories and reducing blood sugar. It will help tone your muscles and vitally improve your posture. Of course, standing is rarely acknowledged as an exercise as such, but do try and remember the many benefits. And why not set reminders to stand more often.

Walking around helps your body reset
itself into healthy posture,
so make it a point to get up from
your desk at least twice an hour.

9. **Positioning your computer** so that you are sitting straight and you are not looking down to type. Investing in an ergonomic desk that moves up and down to allow you to stand for periods can be a great idea. Here you can see me at one of the workstations in my clinic with my saddle type chair taking some of my weight whilst I'm effectively still standing. You can be sure I don't spend all day sitting at my screen, even when I'm spending long hours writing, I tend to move between sitting and standing and this mid-position throughout the day.



If this isn't possible, consider moving your laptop to a surface that is chest height occasionally. If you alternate between sitting and standing, you will find it very beneficial.

“Your best posture is your next posture.”

—Morgan Freeman

10. **Drivers, sit up in a good posture and set your rear view mirror.** When you slouch, you then become aware of it. Every time you stop at the lights, press your head back into the headrest. This strengthens the neck muscles and will ultimately hold you in better shape. Do pelvic rolling exercises to keep the lower spinal discs nourished, and use a lumbar support to maintain the vital lower back curve. Engage your abs as often as possible to maintain core strength and prevent deconditioning.
11. **Stretch the back and strengthen the abs.** We are living in a world where seemingly everyone is developing a tight back and weak abs. This is wreaking havoc on our structural balance and integrity. You are well advised to stretch your back regularly whilst strengthening your abdominal muscles. Try and firm your stomach muscles as often as you can remember to do so.
12. **Do everything with good posture.** Be mindful of your position as you go through the day. Try and do everything with good posture, whether it be watching TV, driving to work, or doing your daily chores. It all adds up, and small, regular corrections will make a huge difference in the long run.

**“Continuous effort – not
strength or intelligence – is the key
to unlocking our potential.”**

—Winston Churchill

Finally, become familiar with the website resources we have put online for you. Read our posture blog and follow our Facebook Page:

www.totalhealthchiropractic.com.sg

www.facebook.com/TotalHealthChiropracticSG

www.posturemattersbook.wordpress.com



For people in Singapore, scan the code for a FREE 60-minute Postural, Spinal, Structural & Wellness evaluation including initial treatment by a doctor at Total Health Chiropractic Doctor. Valued at SGD 160.00

[www.totalhealthchiropractic.com.sg/
posture-matters-book-readers-offer](http://www.totalhealthchiropractic.com.sg/posture-matters-book-readers-offer)

**“You cannot
teach something
to someone
who thinks he
already knows.”**

—Aristotle



CHAPTER 9

SO WHAT IS STOPPING YOU?

I am an optimist by nature; I think that is a major reason why I am a Doctor of Chiropractic. When I see a client or meet a person in everyday life, I observe things. I notice how people are doing health-wise, I recognise their conditions, and I see which direction they are moving. However, where there is loss of potential, I also see great possibilities. Almost everyone can improve their future health by making a few small changes. But will they? For most people, the answer is probably not.

We are designed magnificently with almost unlimited potential, yet the majority won't come anywhere close—settling for a life less wonderful and less vibrant. I'm not just talking about posture here, nor the need to correct the effects of sitting all day. This can be applied to all areas of your life. They are all connected.

Our brains are conditioned for instant gratification and will come up with all sorts of reasons and perceived obstacles why an extended, drawn-out process, like becoming healthy, isn't necessary.

Many actually do believe that they will start to make healthy changes sometime in the future, when all the right conditions fall into place. They've convinced themselves that 'one day' they will have

the time, the money, and focus to become healthy again; full of good intentions, with no positive actions. 'I'll start after the holidays' or 'next year, I'll have more time'. You know the type.

Well, here's the truth. **THERE NEVER WILL BE A PERFECT TIME!** Something will always crop up or get in the way. If you think about it, you know I'm right. If you want to be healthy in the future, you have to start living healthy today. Yesterday is gone, and nothing can be done about it, that I agree. But your future is a blank canvas and is there for the taking. If you are going in the wrong direction, then let this be the catalyst that gets you back on track. You will be old and arthritic before you know it.

For many, it's as if you are saying, 'I will start my journey when I know all the lights will be on green.' Let's face it... it's never going to happen.

If it was going to happen, it would have happened already. You'd have found that perfect opportunity to get healthy again. Health is more about a journey throughout life, rather than finding that perfect time. It's a state of mind, and you either have it, or you don't. Some people seem to make it look easy, whilst others never seem to get started. Every day that you travel further down the wrong path makes it harder to get back on purpose, so don't delay.

Wherever your body is now, it is a blueprint for future growth. If there is postural distortion, then that's the way it's going to grow, and things are going to get worse, much worse.

It takes a certain type of person to constantly monitor their health, being vigilant, spotting things that need attention, and taking the necessary action to restore balance. It requires a desire for health and daily proactivity, and it needs constant interest and learning. It needs **ACTION!** So, are you proactive or more of a procrastinator? Is it time for change? But then of course, without education, how would you know any different? This book can make a big difference to your life; that is its intention. It is meant to teach you the **WHY!** Why having good posture throughout your life is so, so important.

One thing that has become very apparent to me is that, in life, it is a case of ‘the way you do something, is the way you do everything’. People who are successful are generally the ones who commit to things and then follow through to the end result. Even when they are not absolutely sure, they do their research and then they are prepared to take that leap of faith. They know that no one action (or lack of action) caused the problem, so it is a matter of finding the appropriate solution and then getting on with it.

The Main Reasons Why People Don’t Actively Engage In Posture Correction Or Maintenance

We can summarise the main reasons that the majority of people are not actively engaged in posture correction or maintenance as follows:

What have they been taught? Or rather not taught! – This is not about formal education, as this problem crosses all boundaries and all classes. But one thing is for sure, all curricula, especially IT and computer courses should incorporate a section on protecting one’s posture and health. Actually, this stuff should be taught at schools, and I am happy to report that we are receiving more and more enquiries to carry out posture screenings and health talks at educational facilities.

The government and corporations – These have enormous influence on our lives and simply not enough resources are being directed at this problem. Some are doing a better job than others, but generally, there is a long way to go. Moreover, ergonomic furnishings are perceived as being expensive and cost-prohibitive. Often, we are invited into organisations to do health screenings and give postural advice, something we are always happy to do. However, there is very often a concern that we may recommend expensive ergonomic desks and chairs.

The medical community – These are the people to whom we entrust our family’s health. However, the fundamental problem here is that they hardly teach any nutrition, exercise physiology, gravitational biology, or postural physiology at medical school. Because these are the fundamental

determinants, or building blocks of health, it is pretty easy to understand why medicine is very poor at prevention and this problem has been allowed to get out of control.

Historical conditioning of mindset – Even super intelligent people fall into the posture trap. Everyone has been conditioned to think ‘no pain, no problem’. We are told that if we do suffer some pain, then very often it is either from the effects of aging, ‘normal’ wear and tear, stress, or that it is some genetic affliction we’ve inherited from our parents.

Busy lives – The excuse I hear the most. Our time is full already and this is just another thing to worry about. In Singapore, people often look at me as I speak the truth as if I’m mad. The very idea that they may have to make a few changes to their lifestyle, or their daily habits, perhaps do a few more exercises, takes them far out of their comfort zone. It feels much safer with their head buried deeply in the sand. Someone once said that if you don’t make time now to look after your health, then you’ll later be forced to make time to look after your sickness. How very true!

Slow onset – The unhealthy changes to posture happen so slowly, they are rarely recognised early, thus, no corrective measures are taken. There may be a mild ache or some stiffness gradually appearing, but early on, not necessarily.

Eventually, it catches up on you; it always does. My advice is to start immediately, and especially get your children checked early, certainly well before they reach skeletal maturity.

Safety in numbers – Herd mentality is a very powerful influence. Those that are actively engaged in postural correction are the ‘early adopters’ in life, the people who tend to be ahead of the game. We attract many of these exciting, vibrant people into our offices because when something is perceived as new and desirable, early-adopters jump right on to it. Life is too short to spend half of it suffering compromised health unnecessarily. Of the other folks out there, most will get there in the

end, but it will take some time, as the masses first have to be convinced, and then slowly, as a herd or a crowd, they will eventually start to move in the right direction.

Painfully slow progress – Unfortunately, this is a quick fix, instant gratification society, and when it takes time to get results, most people will lose interest and fall by the wayside. Well, the time is going to pass anyway, so start making healthy choices and just keep going. It takes three months to create or break a habit, good or bad. Before you know it, you will be on a healthy track, feeling the benefits, and then there is no looking back.

**“If it doesn’t CHALLENGE you,
It doesn’t CHANGE you!”**

—Fred Devito,
co-founder of the Core Fusion® program

Unhealthy lifestyle – Most modern jobs involve way too much sitting every day, and have become the ‘normal’ way of life. The effort necessary to balance any damaging effects are perceived as being too onerous or worse still, unnecessary. If we have discomfort, we look for the easiest way out—a massage or a pill, neither of which is going to do you any good in the long run as there is no correction.

Perceived cost – To many, the cost of attending yoga or Pilates classes and visiting a chiropractor seems expensive and this becomes their excuse. Of course, there is a cost, as with most things in life, but this is a world of choices and there is always a need to prioritize at any given time. If cost is your worry then I suggest you at least find out how your structural alignment is, and take an interest in your family’s posture and start following the simple steps I have outlined.

**“Gold that buys health can
never be ill spent.”**

—Thomas Dekker,
playwright of *Westward Ho*

Culture change required – As we navigate life, there are huge motivating forces at play. We are driven and ambitious to become ‘that person’. You study for exams, strive and train for a position on the team. Of course, you are happy to work an all-nighter on the project; if you don’t, someone else will. But where is the motivation for health? That desire has to come from inside us, and it has to be maintained as a permanent state. For many, this is just too much to even consider.

So, we have seen how many forces unwittingly conspire against us. No wonder this situation is worsening and spiralling out of control. We won’t save everyone, that’s for sure. But if we can start to make a dent, start at home and in our immediate community, then for every soul we nudge in the right direction, then it’s another person’s future saved. I challenge you to step up, make healthy choices an important part of your life, and before you know it, it has become a lifestyle, and you can go on to become a winner and not just another victim.

**“If it is important to you,
you will find a way.
If not, you’ll find an excuse!”**

—Author unknown

WARNING!

Improving your posture is likely to cause the following side effects!

- 1. Less pain.**
- 2. Reduced stress.**
- 3. Increased energy and less fatigue.**
- 4. Reduced arthritis.**
- 5. Slower and kinder aging.**
- 6. Improved immunity (less colds & flu).**
- 7. Increased confidence.**
- 8. Improved sporting performance.**
- 9. You'll make more money.**
- 10. You will look sexier. 😊**

**“We are what we
repeatedly do.
Excellence,
therefore,
is not an act
but a habit.”**

—Aristotle



CHAPTER 10

POSTURE MATTERS FOR ‘TOTAL HEALTH’

So by now, you should have a decent awareness that poor posture is bad for you, and at times REALLY bad for you. You’ve either read this book or been into one of our clinics. If you are concerned that you or a family member are showing signs of postural slump, or you have had this confirmed by a chiropractor, or other health professional, then it is important that you know what this actually means.

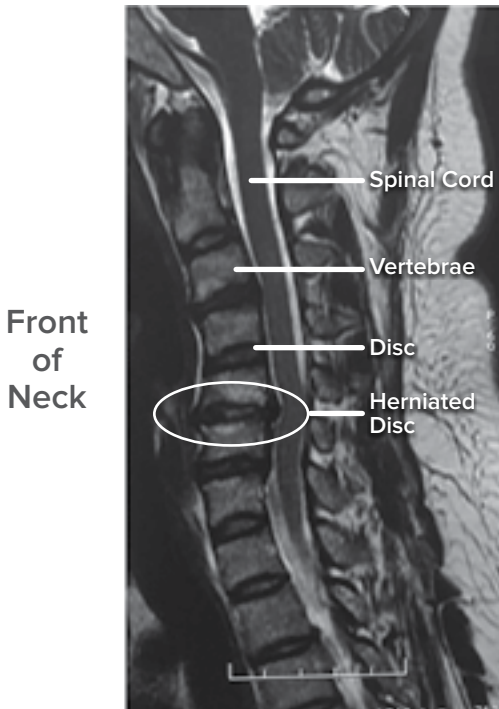
Forward Head Posture - What Does This Really Mean?

It means your spine has lost its balance, has become unstable and structurally weak. You have a blueprint for future growth that is extremely unhealthy and will lead to ever worsening posture, and eventually, it will cost you your health.

If you ARE developing forward head posture, ‘hunchback’, or a postural ‘slouch’, then not only does it look terrible, but internal degenerative changes will be hastening your aging process. Yes, you absolutely can speed up or slow down the manner in which your body ages! With bad posture, the soft tissues surrounding the spine, the joint capsules, the muscles, and ligaments, come under increasing strain and will stiffen permanently. The upper back muscles have

to work all day, just stopping the head from falling forward, hence, the tight shoulders and back, and the stiff neck. No wonder chronic fatigue is another inevitable result. Your body is expending huge amounts of energy just being still, holding its shape in gravity.

It is actually not uncommon for the forward head to increase in weight from 5kg to 20kg or more because of the physical laws of leverage. Without correction, this will eventually cause the discs to fail as they become compressed and ischemic (restricted blood supply). The forward head pushes the now bulging discs backward into the delicate nerves. Now, we have nerve symptoms and deficits starting to affect our lives.



Here, you see a disc in the neck being forced backwards into the central canal and squeezing the spinal cord. This is what is usually referred to as a 'slipped disc'. Symptoms can vary from initially mild to eventually, extremely severe and life-changing.

You have never seen anyone with poor posture enjoy both longevity and vibrant health.

These structural misalignments that are interfering with the nerves, or **subluxations**, if left uncorrected, can be catastrophic for your health. Most

crucially, poor alignment of your cervical curve will cause strain or pressure on the most important parts of your nervous system, the brain, the brain stem, the spinal cord, and the corresponding spinal nerve roots!

Because of the intimate relationship between the spine and the central nervous system within, it is just not possible to develop poor posture without it eventually affecting your health terribly. This is why, you have never seen anyone with poor posture enjoy both longevity and vibrant health. The two conditions just cannot coexist. Think about it! You must have a well-aligned, balanced, and fully-functioning spine if you are to maintain a clear brain–body CONNECTION!

If poor posture persists, then unfortunately, the problem WILL inevitably worsen as stiffness and misalignments increase. And as postural collapse hastens, the nervous system becomes increasingly compromised.

In the neck region, the nerves that exit the spine are extremely important. They supply to and receive nerve impulses from the diaphragm for breathing, various regions of the head (cranial nerves), the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, cheek, and neck. They also connect to the shoulders, arms, forearms, and hands. Hence, with neck problems starting, it is common to sense numbness or tingling, or feel weakness in the upper arms and shoulder, as well as experience fatigue, breathlessness, headaches, and dizziness.

Worsening postures everywhere mean more nerve interference and more loss of human potential.

This unfortunate posture puts unnecessary physical stress on the vertebrae, causing degenerative changes, osteoarthritis, spondylitis, degenerative disc disease, and worse still, it causes strain or tension on the spinal cord (central nervous system) and nerve roots. Increasing nerve pressure is the reason poor posture is strongly associated with failing health.

Feels bad – Postural muscles overwork to counterbalance gravitational forces. It leads to strain, chronic stiffness, constant achiness, chronic fatigue, loss of sensation, tingling and numbness, shoulder and arm pain, and of course, headaches.

Looks bad – Severe forward head is usually accompanied with loss of height and a rounded hunched back. Not very pretty!

Destroys health – Take a good look at some of the effects that forward head posture will eventually have on your health. These are the effects that we can predict, which happen to pretty much everyone who develops bad posture and lives long enough.

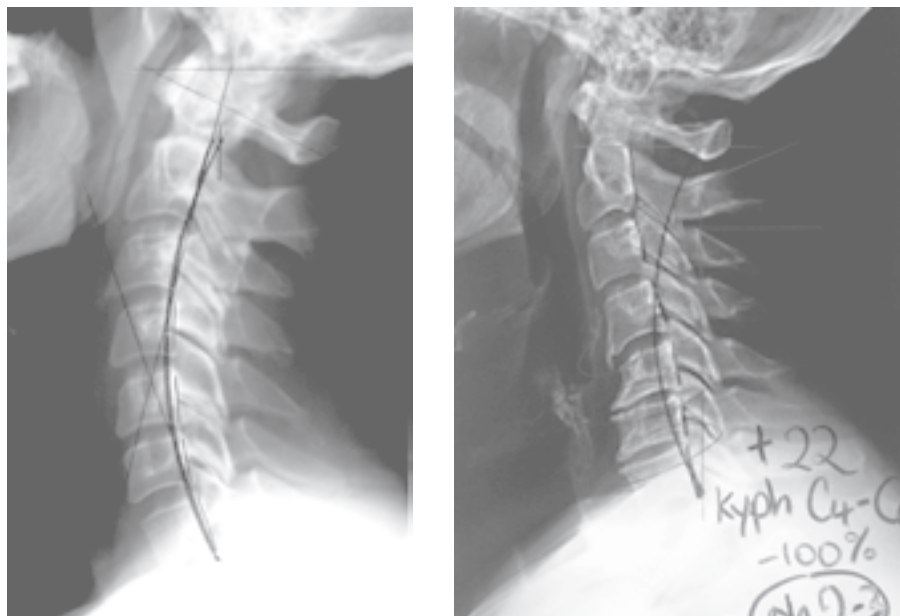
Summary Of Detrimental Effects

- Loss of structural balance
- Increased rate of spinal degeneration
- Diminished blood supply to tissues
- Tension to spinal cord and brain stem
- Nerve root impingement causing numbness, tingling, and pain
- Thinning spinal discs – high chance of prolapse (slipped disc)
- Formation of bone spurs
- Spinal Stenosis
- Headaches and/or dizziness
- Neck and shoulder pain
- Stiffness, restricted motion, and muscle pain
- Spinal buckling
- Loss of height
- Chronic fatigue
- Restricted breathing, digestive disorders, impaired immune system, etc.
- Postural distortion leading to low back pain
- Premature ageing with loss of vitality
- Eventual postural collapse
- Increasing pain—reminds us all is not well

What It Looks Like On The Inside

Look at the two very different neck X-rays. The one on the left, looking to the left, has a normal shape or posture. The healthy curve forms a shock

absorber and the weight of the head is evenly distributed with no build-up of tension. Here, the spinal cord is relaxed and if there is any stiffness and symptoms, they are very mild and only occasional.



On the right, however, the head has come forward and the healthy curve is gone. The weight of the head has increased three-fold and is being supported entirely by the poor discs. We now have serious degenerative disc disease, and to buy time, bone spurs are growing as the body desperately tries to stabilise and save the all-important nerves. This is moving into the advanced stages of spinal degeneration and urgent action is required to prevent further deterioration.

By the time a person reaches this stage of degeneration, most of the listed symptoms are already being experienced and life is not much fun anymore. This person on the X-ray is barely 50, has already suffered for 15 years, and is now wondering how he is going to manage to get through the next 35 years or so. That's more than half a lifetime of pain and suffering, and totally avoidable!

In the next example, we see three X-rays of the same person's neck taken at different times. In the first, we see that he had lost his neck curve and actually developed an abnormal reversed curve. At this stage, the degeneration is mild as he is barely 40 years old. In the second X-ray, taken nine years later, we can see that the discs are thinning as they are compressed by the abnormal distribution of weight. In the third X-ray, taken a further 14 years later, we see near destruction of the spinal joints. It was at this stage when I met this dear man and he had already been suffering for decades. Do note that these X-rays are of the **same person**, and what we are seeing here are the destructive forces and early aging that always follow poor posture.



Time To Restore A Healthy Balance

Health is a process and, of course, all processes require time!

It is only with specific chiropractic adjustments, together with the correct spinal stability and flexibility exercises, simple traction and postural retraining, that your body can become rid of these destructive misalignments, allowing function to improve, the degenerative process to be halted, and the tissues to repair.

However, we should take note of an important physiological and chiropractic principle: Health is a process and, of course, all processes require time!

Healing is a process of recreating yourself, one cell at a time, over time. Although you may feel great after a single chiropractic adjustment, usually, a series of specific adjustments together with exercise, applied consistently over a number of weeks or even months, is often needed to achieve the necessary lasting changes. If you consider that many of these degenerative subluxations have been gradually worsening over a number of years, then allowing time for change seems reasonable.

Of course, if you wish to restore lost or diminished levels of health you must get the basics right—eat healthily, and do some exercise to strengthen the body and get the heart pumping. The other basic requirement is structural and neurological integrity. Our foundation and structural column must be true and straight, with our life-giving nerve flow unimpeded. This is the aspect of health and physiology that is ignored by many, leading to terrible consequences. Those that have become aware of these simple facts and wish for a healthy, vibrant life, embrace chiropractic. There are millions throughout the world who have changed their life for the better and now, would never be without it.

As modern life continuously stiffens your joints and destroys your posture, a proactive approach to health is required. This is why chiropractic has become a vital part of modern life for many, and has become one of the fastest-growing health systems in the world.

How Do We Restore Spinal Health?

If you have completely lost your healthy cervical curve, it is absolutely vital that you correct this issue as quickly as possible. This correction can take from 12 – 20 weeks, depending on how long you have left it, and how much damage has built up. We have to evoke changes to muscles, bones, nerves, and ligaments. To do that, we have to change shape, form, and function, and then allow time for healthy change. Once you start to move back towards health, you will find the benefits amazing. Health IS our natural state and healing is our normal physiology. So, when we restore balance and function to the spine and remove stresses from the nerves, you will find the body's

ability to heal amazing and at times miraculous. This is why we have a sign above our front desk stating simply, 'Expect a Miracle'. Indeed, we witness the amazing recuperative powers of the body every day.

To restore the movement of the joints and the position of the vertebrae, we perform very precise spinal 'adjustments', which may be associated with a release of tension and an audible pop, which is just a release of gas from the fluid in the joint. A series of precise manipulations or adjustments are required with sufficient regularity to break up scar tissue and turn off the pain reflexes whilst enabling the positive changes to gradually become the new normal.

Because we are making many important changes to the spine, the treatments will usually include both spinal adjustments to improve function, and traction to open joints, stretch spinal ligaments, and encourage the vital spinal curves to recover. Of course, the client has to be proactive, and to get the most from the correction, regular stretching and strengthening of the spine will help stabilise and hold the new improved posture.

Why is traction necessary? We have to retrain the soft tissues so they allow for a more balanced, better functioning spine. To lengthen the tissues that have shortened and achieve long lasting changes, a sustained force must be applied. To bring the head back on the shoulders and restore the vital neck curve (known to many as the 'Arc of Life'), we apply extension traction to the neck. If you follow the recommended process, then the results are predictable and life-changing.

The Correction Process

Prevention is
ALWAYS better
than cure.

Because the subluxations and degenerative changes have taken many years to appear, it is only reasonable to expect some time for the correction to happen. The soft tissues have adapted to this 'subluxated' malposition by lengthening on one side and shortening on the other. As a result of the postural stress, fibrotic scar tissue has formed around the joints.

Of course, like any process, there is a beginning, middle, and an end.

1. **Initial Intensive Period** – Initially, there must be a relatively short intensive period of adjustments to initiate healthy change and get things improving. This may be a period of several weeks, which is not unreasonable if you consider how long the problem took to build up. Here, each adjustment is building on the one before as we break down scar tissue, gradually slowing down and stopping the degenerative process whilst initiating healing.
2. **Follow-up Corrective and Consolidation Phase** – Once the changes get some forward momentum, the treatments can usually be slowed down, whilst the patient continues to perform the daily postural and functional exercises. We can usually drop the frequency down to once a week for an extended period until maximum improvement and stability is achieved.
3. **Maintenance Phase** – Once the corrections are made, the patient is healthier, more stable, and hugely improved symptomatically. It would make no sense to allow regression, so we will always recommend periodic adjustments, postural awareness, and regular specific exercises. Modern life causes stress, poor posture, stiffening, and misalignment. This continually causes subluxation and nerve interference, and this is why regular chiropractic maintenance is recommended throughout life.

Prevention is ALWAYS better than cure. Once you understand chiropractic and have experienced the benefits, it makes complete sense to embrace a chiropractic lifestyle and maintain your posture, structure, and spinal health for a healthy future. Millions of people around the world are walking adverts for lifetime chiropractic care, much like the millions that are enjoying the benefits of lifetime dental care.

How Often Must I See A Chiropractor To Maintain My Spine?

Depending on how much degeneration is around the spine, and depending on lifestyle, the regular maintenance required to maintain postural and spinal health will either be once or twice a month. Some people find they do much better with a weekly adjustment, but of course, it depends on the individual and their circumstances.

If you are sitting at a computer for 10 hours a day, then you must take the necessary steps to balance the detrimental effects. If you stay on top of things and look after your posture, your spine, and nervous system, then the benefits for your life, going forward, will be absolutely enormous. You will avoid the degenerative, arthritic conditions that plague most people as they age. You will have a robust immune system, have less fatigue, more energy, and, most importantly, you will be far more able to be that person you could or should be, for yourself, your family, and your community.

Your posture is your window to your spine so guard it well!



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Posture and Health

Basic Truths

1. Posture is one of the main factors in **determining your health** and **how you age!**
2. Our bodies are self-regulating organisms and **health is our natural state**
3. Health is the maintenance of **homeostasis** or a state of balance.
4. Disease is when the body can't maintain or restore a **state of balance.**
5. Bad posture is a **loss of structural, physical balance.**
6. Physiology (how the body works) must adhere to all the **laws of the universe.**
7. Bad posture means **poor alignment** and inefficiency in a gravity environment with misaligned joints that wear out faster than normal.
8. Postural distortion means increased **pressure on vital organs**, especially **diminished oxygenation** of all our organs tissues and cells.
9. Abnormal posture means **compromised nerve flow** and diminished ability for our body to self regulate.
10. As in life itself, **health is a journey.** It's not about the destination. At any one time we are either moving towards life and health or we are moving towards disease and death!

**Remember, it's never too late
for healthy change!**

**“Life is not
merely
to be alive,
but to be
well.”**

- Marcus Valerius Martialis,
ROMAN POET

CONCLUSIONS

Over the years, it has been my privilege to be able to help thousands of wonderful people around the world. This has deeply left its mark on me and brought on much personal growth. I now have absolute clarity in my purpose.

Clearly, health is a requirement if we are to get the most out of life. However, we also know that it doesn't just happen, and without some effort, it certainly can't be expected. This book has been about structure and function and the universal laws that are at play here. Just as, if you continually neglect to service your car, it would break down; if you abuse or neglect your body for long enough, it will surely break down too.

We are all born with unlimited potential, with an amazing life inside us just waiting to be realised. Few, however, come even close—living at a level of health and achievement way below what's possible. This is a great shame, all those good years going to waste.

Most patients I have encountered along the way will agree that, armed with hindsight, if they had their time again, they would take their health far more seriously.

We've asked you to take stock of your own health and consider where it is going. The aches and pains have been telling you for years to make a change. If you are stiff and aching now, then what lies ahead for you? And what about your family? If your kids are spending more hours a day sitting at computers than you did, then their health will probably be much worse than yours. How does that make you feel? Remember, your health is a journey, and it is taking you to a new state of being. How will that be for you in the future?

I dedicate my efforts, and those of my company, to helping as many as we can, to reach their potential in life. This book is simply my next step in this quest. Simply put, it is intended to inspire you to live a better life.

I've encouraged you to be more observant and see what works well for others. Those who have enjoyed good alignment throughout their lives, enjoy balance and fluidity of movement into old age. For them, exercise remains a pleasure and a part of daily life. We now know that aging isn't about luck or fate. It is a life-long process with patterns being created all the way. As they say, 'you reap what you sow'. The postural collapse we observe all too often, took years in the making.

You now have an awareness that your very life experience is through your nervous system, and that if you truly want to be 100% alive, then this expression of your life force must be clear of interference. The greatest drain on your vitality and your potential in life is spinal distortion and compromised nerve function. Take a walk through any geriatric ward or nursing home and you'll see. Those with the worst postures, generally have the worst health. But how did they end up in this position? Simple, they lost their structural balance, and gravity did the rest.

For many, my message may not be what you want to hear, but it is certainly what you need to hear. It has been my intention to challenge comfort zones and ask parents to consider what is really best for their children. This is a proactive approach to health and the consistent application of healthy habits. Now, we absolutely understand how our skeletal structure forms the framework supporting our bodies, and that its alignment and relationship with gravity is fundamental to health and vitality.

Incredibly, many of you reading this book will actually have forgotten what it feels like to have a well-balanced spine. That wonderful feeling of comfort and ease, a certain lightness—without stress, stiffness, fatigue, or pain. As in childhood, there is no fear of movement or injury. You feel free and unencumbered. Breathing is deep and easy, and your senses are clear and alert. Everything feels right, just as it should be. Jumping out of bed in the morning, the endless possibilities of the day ahead energize and excite you, and your daily tasks are taken in your stride. Your confidence and optimism set you apart from the rest, whilst those around seem to carry a burden, that is their life. This is a life in balance, and this is a life available to anyone.

“The Chinese use the same word for ‘crisis’ and ‘opportunity’. Why not use any health or medical scare as an opportunity to make healthy changes that will change the course of your life?”

—Dr. Tim Errington

We must learn, from an early age, to be mindful of our bodies and what they are telling us. Our early habits form the patterns or blueprints for our future growth. We must learn about balance and movement from the start. Yes, muscle tightness means structural distortion and eventual postural collapse. Tight muscles expend energy and, of course, this must bring fatigue. A forward stoop means you are constantly fighting gravity, thus, chronic fatigue and premature aging can be the only end. Such is the importance of this subject, it should really be taught at schools.

The problem, however, is profound, and evidence clearly shows that, to the average person, I may as well be talking in a foreign language. A documentary entitled, *The Inconvenient Truth*, was actually written about global warming, but could just as easily have made a perfect title for this book.

Unfortunately, looking after one’s posture is not perceived as something someone can really influence. It is how you are, the luck of the draw, if you like. If you are to grow stooped and frail, old before you time, then that is down to your genes. Well, I’m appealing to you with this book, it’s time to wake up and take this subject seriously. If not for yourself, then for your children’s sake! This is real and it’s getting worse. Your kids will probably have worse posture than you, and they will suffer the consequences. If you choose not to teach your children these simple lessons in life, then it will be down to you.

Thankfully, many corporations and governments are beginning to learn the importance of posture, ergonomics, and lifestyle. My company, Total Health Chiropractic Pte. Ltd., is involved in a huge and rapidly growing outreach program, bringing this vital information to as many as we can reach in Singapore. Everyday, we are now invited to different organisations to make presentations, carry out posture and spinal health screenings, and educate the good people we meet. We are screening and educating all the teachers in all the schools of Singapore as well. We are determined to get this message into every household in the country. And to educate the masses, we must teach the teachers!

There are also some very forward-thinking corporations that are embracing healthier ways of doing business. Gradually, corporate leaders and visionaries are seeing the enormous value of bringing true health care to their staff. We are not talking about merely screening for high blood pressure, diabetes, or osteoporosis. We are seeing nutritional advice, ergonomics, and postural awareness, and even exercise and stretching breaks. We are seeing employee benefits encouraging gym membership, and a healthier approach to life.

The true leaders in this field are creating gymnasiums in the workplace and investing in standing workstations. Some have gone even further and are creating wellness centres, where chiropractors and physios work alongside masseurs, dentists, and medical doctors. This surely is the future, and we fully expect other corporations and organisations to follow suit, as the benefits become more and more apparent. Eventually, it will be legislated as a requirement for business. If you expect your staff to sit at a workstation all day, then you simply must help them avoid all the very grave health consequences that follow.

Ignore this, and surely, corporate health insurance premiums will skyrocket. The medical community will continue to grow rich as disease becomes the norm. Think about heart disease, cancer, and diabetes—these are all avoidable with a proactive, healthy, preventative approach throughout life. Well, sitting disease and postural collapse is the next pot of gold for the big pharmaceutical companies. Unfortunately, medicine has to complicate things unnecessarily, constantly reminding us that health is no simple matter and can't possibly be a job for the ordinary person. Only a highly-trained medical doctor can heal you! Not so!

If you consider that vibrant health IS our natural state, then surely, healing should be possible for pretty much everyone. Restore our natural state and watch the recuperative forces within us work. Yes, the power that made you is the power that will heal you. Disease is NOT normal; it is the state you enter when your body can't re-establish homeostasis or balance. I suggest you spend a little time thinking about this subject, as it could prevent you and your family from sliding down the familiar slippery slope towards destruction.

**“There are two ways to be fooled.
One is to believe what isn't true; the other
is to refuse to believe what is true.”**

—Søren Kierkegaard,
Danish philosopher

A personal note – During the period it took me to write this book, an enormously impactful event happened in my life. This was the passing of my beloved father at 88 years of age. A ripe old age, that's for sure. But during the final few months of his life, there was time spent in the geriatric ward of his local hospital. Here, it was impossible for me not to observe that the more stooped the posture becomes, the closer we are coming to the end. Without doubt, poor posture stiffens you, slows down all function, destroys your balance, hastens cognitive decline, and puts enormous strain on your central nervous system, making recovery less and less likely as it progresses. Posture clearly is something one must be mindful of and work on throughout life and there will be no enduring health without it.

If you have a victim mentality, then this is just what you will become. Life is to be celebrated and nurtured; there is no limit to the health and vitality we can attain. Disease is not an entity in itself to be 'treated'; it's more the loss of health. So, if you squeeze as much health as possible into your body, there simply will be no room for disease. This is my life, and this is the life I want for you. Just as you remove darkness by adding light, we must replace disease with health.

Dr. Tim Ervington

Doctor of Chiropractic (USA)

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For FREE advice on posture and health-related questions, scan the code to send them to DrTim@TotalHealthChiropractic.com.sg and we will try and respond quickly.