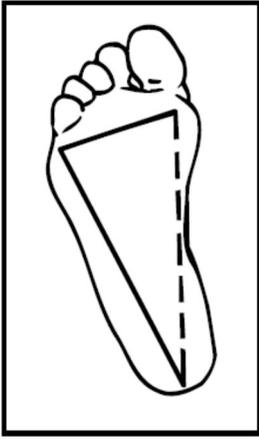


How to find good posture:

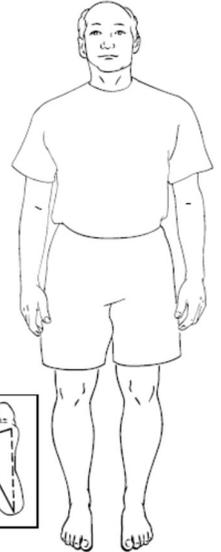


Good posture starts from the base of support up. If you are standing – that is your feet. If you are sitting – it's the pelvis. For full use of the feet you want to have equal weight in the big toe base and the little toe base and the heel. If you stand with both feet hip distance apart you can shift your weight forward and back till you find that spot where you have equal weight front to back and balanced weight side to side through the full foot.

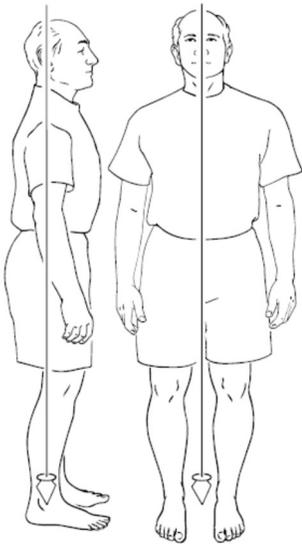
The Foot Triangle of Support is the starting point for all postural correction exercises.

Ground force: Gravity is a constant in our world. And there is something about an equal and opposite reaction rule in physics... So, you will notice that as you stand still and press your feet into the ground – you will feel, and equal and opposite force come back at you (helping you to stand tall if you have that force come

up through your chest. Be careful not to hyperextend your knees) This is the static expression of that law but as you walk – it happens as well. If you will notice how people walk you can begin to see the ground force come out different places on the body. When it goes out through the buttock the upper body is left hanging and the back has to catch the trunk from falling with each step causing much more compression in the low back. Whereas if the ground force comes up to the sternum it actually supports the ribs over the pelvis.



Building blocks and alignment: There is a vertical line going down the middle of us with the plumb landing in the middle of the base of support. Good upright posture has that line going from the ear to the shoulder to the hip, slightly behind the knee and to the ankle.



Deviations from good posture happen in all the cardinal planes – front, side and transection. If you will think about building blocks where your pelvis is a block, your ribs are a block and your head is a block those major blocks can be stacked up straight or helter skelter. So, the pelvis can tilt forward or backward, have one hip higher or lower and have a rotation around the plumb line or have a sheer of the ilium (head lights aimed off to right or left) The same can happen in the ribcage block and in the head/neck block. And we will leave the legs out for now because each segment of the leg has its own alignment...

So now that you have a few details to focus on – think of the whole again and have gravity work for you instead of against you. Stack your blocks from the bottom up aligning as you go. Once you do this – you should find you are much more upright. Your subconscious holding pattern however needs no help to hold you in your current preferred posture, so you will soon find yourself back there... But with conscious choice and frequent reminders – you can reset your subconscious holding patterns to allow you to have better posture. And with MFR interventions to loosen the restrictions pulling you into the pattern it can be easier to get there quicker.

Here are a few ideas for the frequent check in to see how your posture is doing: Glance at your outline when you walk by any reflective surface and do a mental check “How’s my posture?”

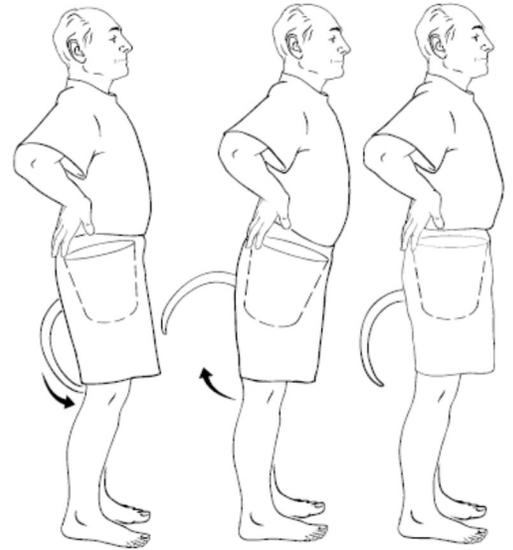


Set up something that is frequent in your day. For me it's between each patient or you could choose each time you stand up. Or when the phone rings... Whatever is right for you to use as a trigger to check your posture.

A good proprioceptive image to use is to imagine you have a shelf on top of your sternum (breastbone) Imagine you have a cup of coffee on the shelf that you don't want to spill. Be careful that this lift through the sternum is not accompanied by the lower ribs popping forward and up – they want to stay long and low but flexible, so you can breathe deeply. Good posture should be mobile – not stiff.

The position of block one the pelvis is very important. Again, mobility and stability are both important. If you are having pain – stability is more important but as soon as you can manage – mobility within pain free range is important for back health. With arthritis I stiffen up each night so it's my morning ritual to free up the movement within the pain free zone to the best of my ability, so I have it to use all day. And some days – I may need to free up more frequently... The key to having good stability is for the stability to freely manage movement not for it to statically hold it in place. And to end up in upright alignment with flexibility above and below... If you think about your pelvis like a bowl or a bucket, and your guts like the water it is holding – you can see if the bucket is upright – the guts are supported. Also helpful for the back and posture...

One mobility exercise is to pretend your pelvis is a bucket; top of bucket is the waistline. Pretend a tail is attached to end of tailbone. With your rib cage still, alternately tuck your tail under then stick your tail out (tips "bucket" backward and forward). What is stretching as you go back and forth? Can you end up in the middle with your bucket up?



Another exercise is to elongate your body to stand 2-4 inches taller than you currently are. Imagine a string, golden thread, rope, or steel cable pulling up at the crown of the head. Avoid tilting head back – keep chin parallel to floor. This can be done in sitting as well.

Be careful not to shrug your shoulders. Feel the parts of you were there is tension. This may be an area you want to stretch. Once you get the idea of elongation it is easier to find a place in the middle where there is no tension, yet you are still quite upright in your posture. Free and easy breathing is implied in all good posture work.

Good posture will distribute weight bearing forces throughout the skeleton more correctly, thereby helping to stimulate the growth and maintenance of stronger, healthier, denser bones, and reduce the risk of fracture, other injury or back pain. All parts of the body are inter-connected and need to be in good anatomical alignment for the better health and functioning of the whole.

PRACTICE GOOD POSTURE:

Can be done anytime, anywhere – e.g. standing in line at the grocery store, after finishing brushing your teeth or combing your hair, while talking on the telephone, waiting at the bus/trolley stop, etc.

Do elements of postural correction while sitting working at your computer, reading, driving, or other seated activity. Think about good body alignment when lying down.