

# POSTURE

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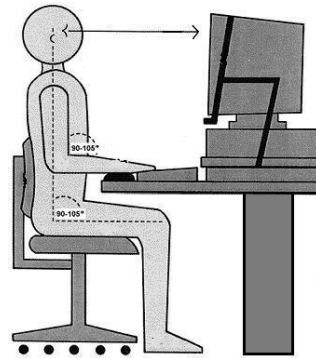
Poor posture is a major contributing factor to many injuries including Repetitive Strain injuries (like carpal tunnel syndrome), back and neck pain.

## GOOD POSTURE AT THE COMPUTER

Good posture while working at the computer is defined as:

- Sitting with your back against the back of your chair to provide proper lumbar (low back) support. You should have a slightly forward curve in your low back and neck, and slightly backward curve in your mid back
- Ears aligned directly over your shoulders.
- Shoulders aligned directly over your hips and relaxed in a slightly pulled back and down position.
- Your hips and knees should be at about 90 degrees.
- Your eyes should be level with your computer screen so that you do not have to move your head up or down to see you work.

- Your wrists should not be resting of anything. If they are, the pressure in your wrist can increase causing pain and tingling in your wrist, hand and forearm. If these symptoms are allowed to persist, you can develop a permanent problem known as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.
- Your feet should be positioned flat on the floor or on a small stool.



## INFORMATION

When you slouch in your chair, the inward curve in the lumbar area changes to an outward curve, and the mid back and neck curves increase. Your head is now in front of your shoulders with your chin sticking out (Forward Head Posture), and the shoulders are now in front of the hips (Rounded Shoulders). This Forward Head and Rounded Shoulder Posture exerts three times more force than normal on the postural muscles in the back, neck and shoulders. The

cumulative effect of this working posture is pain and fatigue in the neck and shoulders while working on the computer.

Your body wasn't designed to stay in very still postures doing very little muscle work for long periods of time. It was made to be either exercising or resting. So, when you sit in a very still posture, you are concentrating and are often stressed, your muscles are not getting a lot of blood pumping through them, and your joints are not moving. The result is stiff sore muscles and joints.

## TREATMENT

The easiest short term fix is to take regular, short exercise and stretching breaks every 20 minutes, with longer, standing breaks every hour. If you time these breaks to occur with normal interruptions, like when the phone rings, they should not affect your productivity. A longer term solution is to have a proper Ergonomic Assessment. Many employers will pay for this service as well as the changes to your work station that are recommended as a result of the assessment.

If you have persistent symptoms, consult your physiotherapist for exercises, positioning advice and treatment.