

healthy LIVING

Fix your posture

By Ed Koh



Even though I can't see you, I'm pretty sure you have a posture problem. Almost everyone I examine in the clinic does. Posture problems can wreak havoc throughout your body. They can create joint and muscular pain, promote inflexibility, and limit your ability to maximize muscle and burn fat. In today's technological age, these posture problems are accelerated because

we spend much more time sitting and staring down at our smart phones, laptops, and tablets.

The most common posture problems that I see are slouched upper back, rounded shoulders, and a forward head. Below is a guide on how to spot these on yourself and ways to correct them. Before we begin, you must first analyze your posture. Have someone take a picture of your body without your shirt on from a side view.

Slouched Back

If you can see a large convex curve in your upper back, you have a slouched back. This posture can create pain in your neck, back, and shoulders. The pain in these regions may be caused by weak back muscles and/or poor upper back mobility.

How to fix it:

Cobras. Lie face down with arms at your sides palms down. Lift your chest and hands slightly off the floor while

squeezing your shoulder blades and keeping your chin down. Hold 5 seconds; do 2 sets of 12 daily.



Foam roller. Lie face up with a foam roller placed perpendicularly at your midback; place your hands behind your head to support it. Arch your upper back over the roller 10 times.

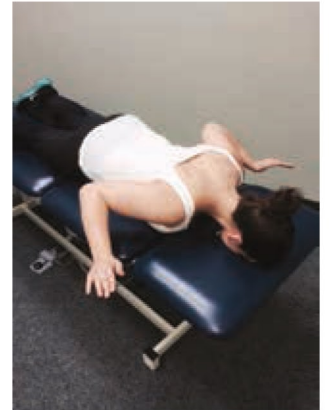
Rounded Shoulders

If you can see your shoulder blade, your back is too rounded. Your rounded back is due to tight chest muscles and/or weak middle and lower trapezius muscles. These tight and weak muscles can create pain in your neck, shoulders, or back.

How to fix it:

Doorway stretch. Place your arm against a door frame forming an L (or in the high-five position) with your elbow bent 90 degrees. Step through the doorway until you feel a stretch in your chest and the front of your shoulders. Hold for 30 seconds; do 5-6 daily.

Lying "W". Lying face down on the floor, place each arm below 90 degrees (below the high 5 position). Without changing the elbow angle; lift both arms by pulling your shoulders back and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Hold for 5 seconds; do 3 sets of 15 daily.



Forward Head

Look at your ear. If it's in front of the midpoint of your shoulder, you have what physical therapists call a "forward head." A forward head can create pain in your neck and is caused by stiff muscles in the back of your neck and/or weak front neck muscles.

How to fix it:

Daily head nods. Moving only your head, drop your chin down, toward your neck while feeling a stretch in the back of your neck. Hold for a count of 10 seconds; do this 10 times.

Neck crunches: Lying face up on the floor, gently tuck your chin toward your neck as you did with your daily head nods, and then lift your head so it clears the floor. Hold for 5 seconds: Do 3 sets of 15 daily.



Ed Koh is the OCS Clinical Director at G2 Sports and Physical Therapy in Sammamish. Reach out to Ed and the G2 team for any of your Sports Fitness and therapy needs.

Medical Disclaimer: Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. This general information is not intended to diagnose any medical condition or to replace your healthcare professional. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider.