

# THE IMPORTANCE OF NECK & SHOULDER POSTURE

## NEUTRAL SPINE

The neutral spine has a natural S curve to support the body's weight. When the spine rests in a position where there is an absence of tension in the neck, shoulders, low back, and hips. When our spine is out of alignment and posture is compromised, this can put strain on the muscles, nerves, and organs. So, making an effort to work on improving posture becomes a priority.

The spine is made of three segments and when viewed from the side, the natural curve of the spine can be seen. The C-shaped curves of the neck (cervical spine) and lower back (lumbar spine) are referred to as lordosis. The reverse C-shaped curve of the chest (thoracic spine) is called kyphosis. The balance of those curves helps us to stand upright. If any of the curves become too big or too small, it can become difficult to stand up straight, and our posture can appear abnormal.

## ROUNDED SHOULDERS

When we are not conscious of our shoulder position throughout the day, it can change our posture and shoulder and restrict movement. Most of the time, it may not be problematic, however in some cases it can cause discomfort and potentially affect breathing.

## RISK FACTORS

- Obesity
- Muscular imbalances
- Poor sleeping habits
- Stress
- Pregnancy
- Previous or existing injuries
- Holding positions for long periods of time (sitting at a desk, driving, cell phone use, etc.)



## DAILY CHECK IN:

- When do you feel your posture is the best?
- In a typical day, how much time are you driving? How long are you on your mobile device?
- Where do you feel fatigue sets in the most in your body and why?
- What tools do you need to improve your posture?

## PROACTIVE MOVEMENTS

### • Setting your Shoulders in Place

- Stand with your hands at your side.
- Pull the top of your head up as tall as possible.
- Rotate the thumbs to point towards the back of the room. You should feel muscle tension in the middle of your upper back as your shoulder blades retract.



### • Gunslinger Stretch:

- Clasp the hands together at shoulder height as you reach forward with your knuckles and fingers while pushing the shoulders back and looking down through your arms.
- Hands come apart as the hands go wide.
- Pushing your chest forward and gaze upward
- Reaching the backs of the hands as far behind as you can without pain.



- **Overhead Reach**

- Stand with elbows at your side, pinned in close to the body and fingers pointing up.
- Raise your hands up overhead with the hands directly overhead.
- Keep your rib cage pinned down while hands are overhead.

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