

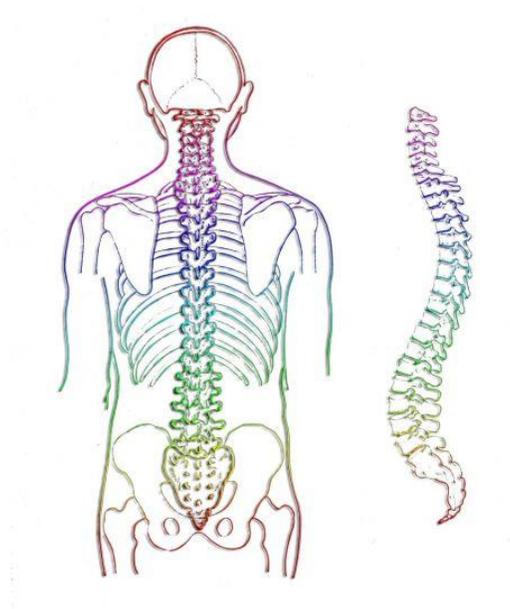
## STRAIGHTEN UP!

Have you ever been told to stand or sit up straight? Have you noticed how much better you feel when you do this? The next time you are “people watching”, take time to observe the way people are holding their bodies. You will probably notice that some people have great posture and look like they are full of energy.... others, not so much!

Good posture is when your **spine**, also known as your **backbone**, and the other joints of your body are in good alignment. When your body is in line, your muscles don't have to work as hard, your joints are not strained, you have more energy and less aches and pains. You also look GREAT! Good posture depends on both strong and flexible muscles!

When you are sitting or standing, it is important to hold yourself in a way that the spine keeps its normal curves. Looking at your spine from the side your neck, also called your **cervical spine**, it has a slightly inward curve or **lordosis**. The middle of your back, called the **thoracic spine**, has an outward curve called **kyphosis**. Your lower back is called the **lumbar spine**, and it also has an inward curve or lordosis.

When viewed from the front or back, the spine should be straight - like this:



Here is an easy way to discover if you have good standing posture.

Supplies:

- Long piece of twine or rope, enough to hang from the ceiling to just above the floor.
- Small object, such as a plastic mug or even a toy, tied to one end of the twine. This will keep the twine perfectly straight.
- Thumbtack
- Camera

Instructions:

Tie your weight (the plastic mug or toy) to one end of the twine.

Have a grown-up help to tack the other end of the twine to a door frame or to the ceiling.

Stand next to the hanging twine so that the side of your body is next to it.

Have someone take a picture of you standing next to the twine.

**If you have perfect posture, your ear, shoulder, hips, knees, and ankles line up right along this line.**

Tips for good standing posture:

- ✓ Head up
- ✓ Chin in
- ✓ Shoulders back
- ✓ Stomach muscles tight
- ✓ Knees straight

Tips for good sitting posture:

- ✓ Support your lower back against the back of your chair. If sitting for a long time, place a rolled towel or small pillow against your lower back to maintain the normal inward curve.
- ✓ Feet should be flat on the floor with the knees at a right angle
- ✓ If you are working at a computer, keep your neck and shoulders upright, rest your arms on the desk, and your shoulders relaxed. Take frequent breaks to rest your muscles.

**Which of these individuals do you think have good posture?**



**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyK0oE5rwFY>

<https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/spinal.html>

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=285&id=2505>

<https://medium.com/better-humans/how-to-teach-your-child-good-posture-habits-34c63ce4020a>

**Books available from the Washoe County Library System:**

*Yoga Games for Children: Fun and Fitness with Postures, Movements, and Breath* by Danielle Bersma and Marjoke Visscher

*Moving* by Jillian Powell