

POSTURE IMPROVEMENT EXERCISES



1. Elbow Lift Behind Back

Clasp hands behind back. Take a deep breath and raise your arms as high as possible behind you, as you try to squeeze your elbows together. Push our chest up and out towards the ceiling. After 15 seconds, breath and pull back against your hands for about 5 seconds. Squeeze elbows together for 15 seconds then relax and shake out. Repeat until you reach your flexibility limit.



2. Stomach Crunches & Stretches

Lie on floor with legs bent to flatten the lower back to the floor. Lift shoulders, then upper back off the floor. Keep lower back on floor. Think of the motion as a curl up. This will result in progressive contraction of the stomach muscles. Lead with your chest, keeping head over and not in front of shoulders. DO NOT put hands behind the neck. Use arm/hand position as illustrated, ie hands on shoulders. Try to use forearms to support the head. Ensure that you stretch out fully, as this stretching will help prevent the stomach muscles from retaining soreness after the exercise. Build up over time to 50 repetitions.



3. Chin Glides

Stand straight. Look ahead to keep head and chin level. Push head straight back as far as possible. Hold 3-5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. DO NOT allow head return to go forward past neutral. DO NOT elevate head, chin or shoulders.



4. Side of Chest & Outer Back Stretch

Place one hand over head, bend at the elbow. Reach behind head with your other hand. Grasp your elbow and pull your overhead arm behind your head. Keep head and chest as high as possible. Lean into stretch for greater effect. After 10-15 seconds, pull back with overhead arm for about 5 seconds. Relax and repeat. Shake off, repeat on other side. The aim is to perform this stretch without having to duck your head forward to clear your arm.



5. Neck Stretch

Take this easy the first few times you do it. Lie on the floor, lift your head off the ground and turn your head to one side. Use hand opposite the turn to gently push head as close to 90° as possible. Hold for 10-15 seconds, then push back against your head for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat. Continue this process on the opposite side. Continue to do this exercise until you have reached maximum travel on both sides. This can also be performed seated—make sure your head is centred over your shoulders. Stretch neck using hand.



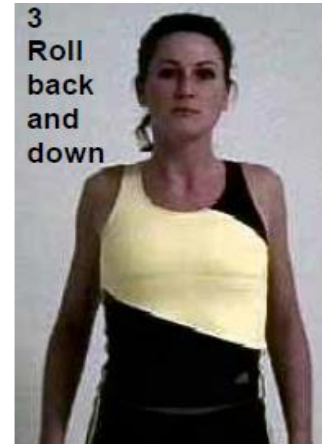
6. Stomach Strengthenener & Stretcher

Standing straight, tighten your entire stomach pulling in and up, not crunching down. Hold for 5—10 seconds. Relax by pushing out your stomach, holding for 5 seconds. Repeat several times until you feel fatigued.



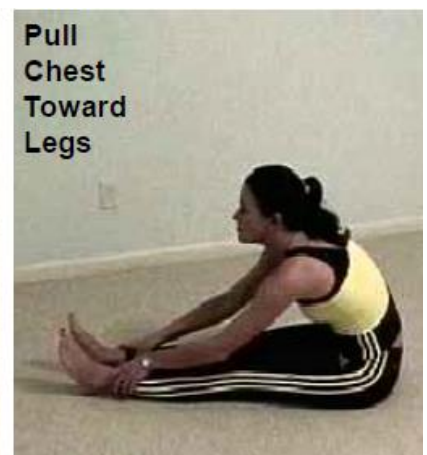
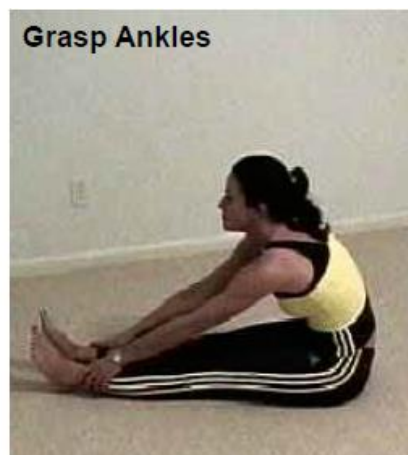
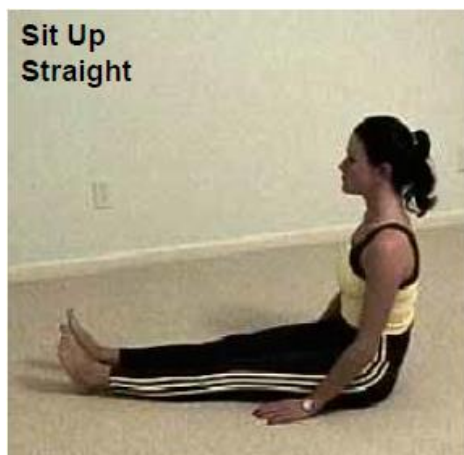
7. Shoulder Rolls & Cross Chest Arm Rolls

Beginning in a standing or sitting position, leave your arms straight, with eyes forward. Roll shoulders up, then back down. Hold the back and down position for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. DO NOT allow the head return to go forward past neutral, per illustration. DO NOT elevate the head, chin or shoulders.



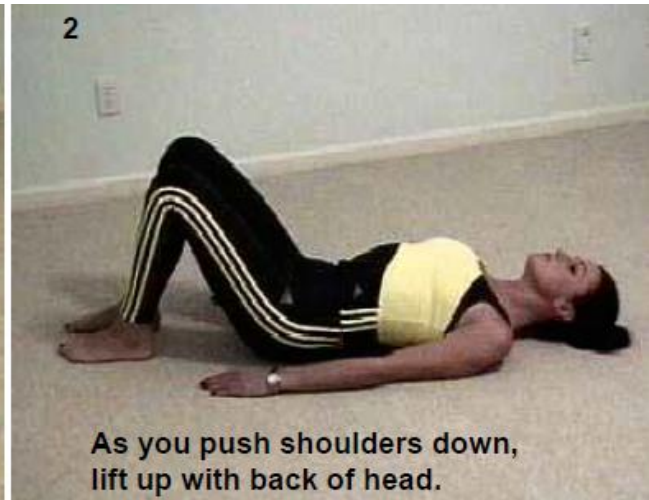
8. Sit and Reach

While on the floor, sit up straight as possible with your legs in front, feet about 3-6" apart, back of knees flat on the floor and feet pointing straight up. While keeping your knees down and looking forwards, grasp your ankles as far down as possible. Pull your chest towards your legs using your arms and stomach muscles for 10-15 seconds. The aim in this exercise is to feel the stretch in your legs and back. Now, pull back against your arms for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times.



9. Back Flattening

Lie on the floor with arms at your sides, knees bent to keep your lower back on the floor and your head on the floor as level as possible. Push your shoulders to the floor and at the same time, reach up as far as possible with the back of your head. Hold for 10-15 seconds. Relax for 5 seconds. Repeat 3-5 more times.



10. Upper Spine Straightener

Stand normally. Shrug your shoulders back and together while you push up and back with your head.

Hold for 5 seconds, relax and repeat 5-10 times.



11. Air Rowing & Cross Chest Pull

Stand with your head up and shoulders down. Extend our arms out in front of you with your elbows bent to 90°. Take a deep breath and slowly try to extend your elbows towards the back as far as possible, while keeping arms level with the floor. Hold for around 3-5 seconds. You should feel this exercise between your shoulder blades.

Relax, shake out and repeat 3-5 times.

End the exercise with the cross-chest arm pull.



Posture Improvement Exercises

General Stretching & Exercise Rules

- If any exercise or stretch causes pain, stop immediately.
- If pain persists, contact your chiropractor.
- Don't "bounce" or perform jerky movements. The exercise or stretch should consist of slow, smooth movements.
- Hold each movement for 10-15 seconds, then relax and "shake out" for a few seconds.
- Perform the exercises and stretches every day. 1-6 on one day, then 7-11 on the next.

Improving Forward Head Posture (Anterior Head Carriage)

It has been well established that the most common deficient posture profile is that of Forward Head Posture. This occurs when the centre of the ear is forward from the centre of the shoulder.

When this happens, the centre of the balance of the body is thrown off and the body begins to distort in an effort to re-correct its centre of gravity. As the head goes forward, the upper body drifts backwards and the hips tilt forward.

This can lead to abnormal stresses on muscles, joints and ligaments, and ultimately lead to abnormal spinal biomechanics.

By recognizing and treating Forward Head Posture early and applying specific posture improvement exercises, it is possible to greatly reduce the amount of Forward Head Posture, and in many cases, bring the posture back to neutral.

The following exercises have been recommended to reduce your Forward Head Posture. Please follow the directions for each manoeuvre closely and remember to consult with Dr Collis if you have any questions.

Posture Re-education Exercise

Get a full length mirror that is hung level. Draw a grid pattern of 5cm squares with a thick line running vertically down the centre. (Thick marker works best)

FRONT VIEW

Stand in front of mirror and use green line as guide. Align the red dots:

- Between eyes
- Under nose
- Sternal notch
- Belly button
- Between ankles

Next, using horizontal lines as your guide, align your:

- Ears
- Shoulders
- Hips
- Knees
- Ankles

Keep all your points on the vertical line and move the body around so the grid squares are filled symmetrically on both sides.

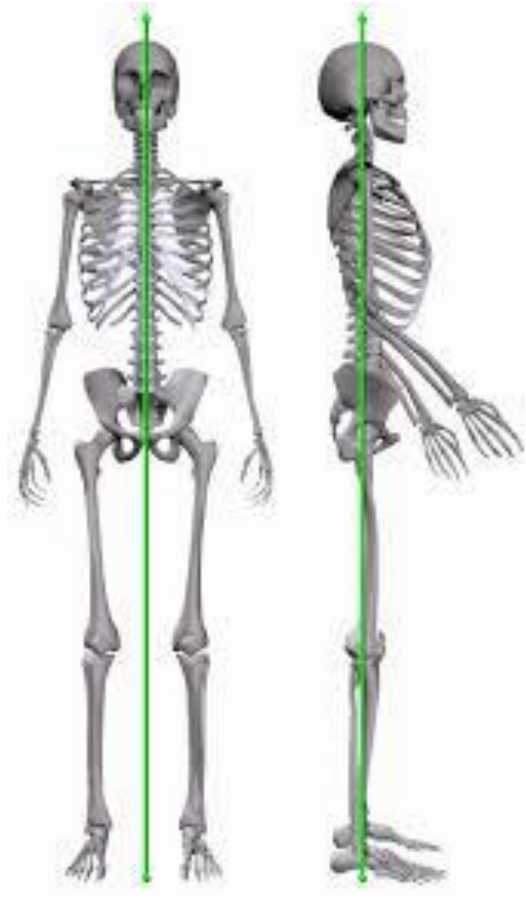
SIDE VIEW

With a hand mirror in your extended hand, angle the hand mirror until you can see the full length mirror and yourself from the side.

Move your body into alignment with the points on the central line. These points are:

- Ears
- Shoulders
- Hips
- Knees
- Front of ankles

Now you are as close to perfect posture as possible.



In each view, close your eyes and try to maintain that posture for 10 seconds.

Remember how this feels.