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Posture

**INTRODUCTION**

**Good posture is a good habit that contributes to the well being of the individual. The structure and function of the body provide the potential for attaining and maintaining good posture.**

**Conversely, bad posture is a bad habit and, unfortunately, is all too common (1). Postural faults have their origin in the misuse of the capacities provided by the body, not in the structure and function of the normal body.**

**If faulty posture were merely an aesthetic problem, the concerns about it might be limited to those regarding appearance. However, postural faults that persist can give rise to discomfort, pain, or disability (1-5). The range of effects, from discomfort to incapacitating disability, is often related to the severity and persistence of the faults.**

**Discussion of the importance of good posture springs from a recognition of the prevelance of postural problems, associated painful conditions and wasted human resources. This text attempts to define the concepts of good posture, to analyze postural faults, to present treatments, and to discuss some of the developmental factors and environmental influences that affect posture. The objective is to help decrease the incidence of postural faults resulting in painful conditions.**

**Cultural patterns of modern civilization add to the stresses on the basic structures of the human body by imposing increasingly specialized activities. It is necessary to provide compesatory influences to achieve optimum function under our mode of life.**

**The high incidence of postural faults in adults is related to this tendency toward a highly specialized or repetitive pattern of activity (1,3). Correction of the existing conditions depends on understanding the underlying influences and implementing a program of positive and preventive educational measures. Both require an understanding of the mechanics of the body and its response to the stresses and strains imposed on it.**

**Inherent in the concept of good body mechanics are the inseparable qualities of alignment and muscle balance. Examination and treatment procedures are directed toward restoration and preservation of good body mechanics in posture and movement. Therapeutic exercises to strengthen weak muscles and to stretch tight muscles are the chief means by which muscle balance is restored.**

**Good body mechanics requires that range of joint motion be adequate but not excessive. Normal flexibility is an attribute; excessive flexibility is not. A basic principle regarding joint movements can be summarized as follows: the more flexibility, the less stability; the more stability, the less flexibility. A problem arises, however, because skilled performance in a variety of sport, dance, and acrobatic activities requires excessive flexibility and muscle length. Although “the more, the better” may apply to improving the skill of performance, it may adversely affect the well-being of the performer.**

**The following definition of posture was included in a report by the Posture Committee of American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (6). It is so well stated that it bears repeating.**

**“Posture is usually defined as the relative arrangement of the parts of the body. Good posture is that state of muscular and skeletal balance which protects the supporting structures of the body against injury or progressive deformity, irrespective of attitude (erect, lying, squatting, or stooping) in which these structures are working or resting. Under such conditions the muscles will function most efficiently and the optimum positions are afforded for the thoracic and abdominal organs. Poor posture is a faulty relationship of the various parts of the body which produces increased strain on the supporting structures and in which there is less efficient balance of the body over its base of support.”**