

Posture

Posture/Neutral Spine

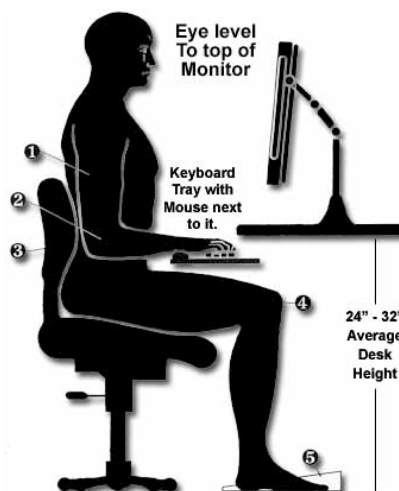
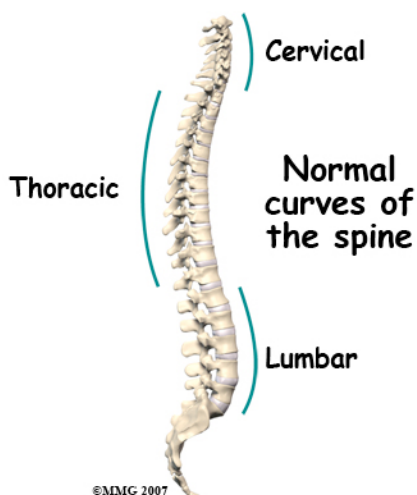
- Neutral spine is the correct alignment and posture for the spine
- In its natural alignment the spine is not straight, it has backward curves in the thoracic (upper) region known as a kyphosis and forward curves in the lumbar (lower) regions, known as a lordosis, the cervical spine or neck also has a slight forward curve
- In a neutral spine position the body is able to perform at its strongest, with minimal stress on the intervertebral discs and facet joints

Interesting facts

- Poor posture is the most common cause of back and neck pain

What you can expect/look out for

- The results of poor posture can be many and wide-spread
- Poor thoracic and cervical posture can lead to neck pain and/or shoulder, elbow and wrist pathology
- Poor lumbar posture can lead to low back, hip and knee pain or pathology
- All this is reversible if you can practice good posture regularly throughout the day



Hints for self-management

- Neutral spine in sitting
 - Feet flat on floor
 - Knees should be lower than hips
 - All 3 back curves should be present, this may mean you need a lumbar support cushion if sitting for a long time
 - Head position so that ear is in line with your shoulder
- Neutral spine in standing
 - Feet hip width apart
 - Knees 'soft' with a micro-bend
 - All 3 back curves present
 - Head centred with ear over shoulder

Management options

- Regular exercise such as walking helps to maintain and improve your spinal alignment
- Exercise therapies such as Pilates and yoga can strengthen the muscles that hold your spinal posture
- Your physiotherapist can teach you specific exercises to help to improve your posture

More information

- Think about and practice good posture 10 times a day, if only for 20 secs each time, your body will slowly start to remember and stay in that position