

A black and white photograph of a person's hands holding a black Pilates ring. The person is wearing a patterned top and a bracelet. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A large teal circle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

# Stand Taller Now

Posture Tips from  
In Balance Pilates

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Having optimal posture can help you achieve flexibility, strength, resiliency, and mobility of the spine. Striving for better posture will improve the movement and ease of the spine, which will decrease back pain. Regular Pilates workouts can help you achieve it — because postural awareness and stability is combined in every exercise.

*A person who moves well in his or her body projects a sense self-confidence, grace and pain free posture.*

If your posture is slumped and you find yourself slouching, you can end up with a protruding waist, rounded spine, and rounded shoulders. This type of poor posture can take inches off your height — definitely not the picture of confidence and energy! Optimal posture is about more than just LOOKS, it's essential to a healthy, well-functioning body.

Poor posture is an energy zapper. If the joints and muscles of the spine are incorrectly balanced, your muscles need to work harder to support the spine. This can also compound many physical ailments, such as digestive problems, poor circulation, headaches, neck pain, low back pain, and breathing inefficiencies. Slouching and poor posture often goes hand in hand with shallow breathing and tense muscles.

Poor posture can easily become second nature, causing and aggravating episodes of back and neck pain. Fortunately, the main factors affecting posture are often within one's ability to control and it's not difficult to change and incorporate these posture tips to obtain optimal posture.

Pilates theory is based on scientific principles that address the optimal structural alignment of the body, that increases awareness of the mind-body connection and that encourages efficient breathing patterns.



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## Posture while sitting

While sitting in an office chair, sit up straight and align the ears, shoulders, and hips in one vertical line. Imagine a strong string lengthening up your spine to bring you up taller. Any prolonged sitting position, even a good one, can be tiring.

In order to maintain a relaxed yet supported posture, change positions frequently. One way is to take a break from sitting in an office chair every half hour for two minutes in order to stretch, stand, or walk. GET UP and MOVE!!

Try shifting forward to the edge of the seat with a straight back and alternate with sitting back against the support of the office chair to ease the work of back muscles. The key is to mix up the sitting position and take the time to move the body before it feels tension.

Be aware of & change unbalanced postures such as crossing legs unevenly while sitting, leaning to one side, hunching the shoulders forward, or tilting the head.

## Increase awareness of posture and ergonomics in everyday settings

Becoming aware of posture and ergonomics at work, at home, and at play is a vital step towards instilling good posture and ergonomic techniques. This includes making conscious connections between episodes of back pain and specific situations where poor posture or ergonomics may be the root cause of the pain.



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## Use exercise to help prevent injury and promote good posture

Set reminders to get regular exercise and make it a daily habit. The benefits of exercise promote good posture, which will, in turn, further help to condition muscles and prevent injury.

PILATES offers specific exercises that will help maintain good posture. In particular, a balance of core muscle and back muscle strength is essential to help support the upper body and maintain good posture.

## Remember good posture when in both STATIC & DYNAMIC motion

Be aware and correct your posture while laying down in a static position (i.e. before performing an exercise).

Also, be aware of how your posture changes during dynamic movement (i.e. do you start to round your shoulders as you go from laying to sitting?)

The way we hold our bodies during rest, walking, heavy lifting, holding a telephone, and being on our laptops are all moving activities that require attention to posture.


## Avoid overprotecting posture

Remember that it is important to maintain an overall relaxed posture. Avoid restricting movements by clenching muscles or adopting an unnatural, stiff posture.

For more help with your posture, self care and Pilates routines contact:

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A person is shown from the chest up, wearing large black over-ear headphones. They are wearing a black and white patterned top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A semi-transparent teal horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text. The person's hands are visible, one near the headphones and the other near their chest.

**BREATH** deeply, **MOVE**  
your body and  
Enjoy Life!