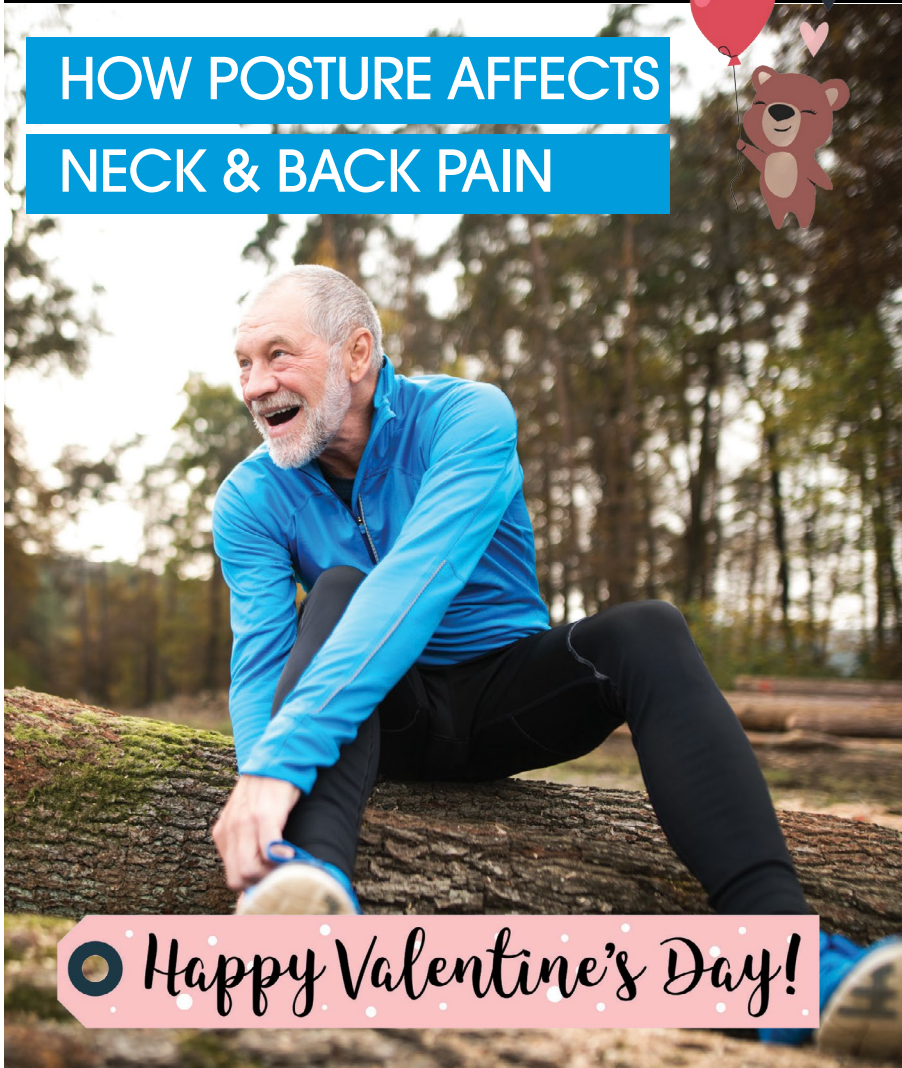


N E W S L E T T E R

HOW POSTURE AFFECTS
NECK & BACK PAIN



Happy Valentine's Day!

ALSO INSIDE:

IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE AT HOME • PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT • HEART HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH AND MORE!

N E W S L E T T E R

HOW POSTURE AFFECTS NECK & BACK PAIN



Remember back when your mother used to tell you that if you wouldn't stop hunching your shoulders, they'd be stuck that way forever? An idle threat, one that barely anyone took seriously. Yet, fast forward a few decades and it turns out that mom might have been on to something, after all.

A poor habit of bad posture can have a lasting impact on your neck and back. The worse your posture is, the more intense your back and neck pain can become. Unfortunately, once you start experiencing neck and back pain, simply squaring your shoulders isn't likely to be much help. Working with a physical therapist can help you to train the muscles in your back, neck and shoulders so that you can improve your posture permanently, and in doing so bring relief to your chronic neck and back pain.

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The Posture and Pain Connection.

Not all back pain is caused by poor posture, and it is true that you can have poor posture for years without feeling the consequences of that slouch right away, but in time the habit is likely to catch up with you. There are certain ways that you can tell if neck or back pain may be a result of poor posture, including:

- The pain in your back is worsened at certain times of day. For example, after you've spent a day at the office, or after a few hours on the couch.

- The pain frequently starts in your neck and moves into your upper and lower back. Pain that seems to travel from one area of the back to another is frequently an indication of posture concerns.
- The pain will subside after switching positions, such as switching from sitting to standing or vice versa.
- Back or neck pain that develops soon after a change in circumstances, such as starting a new job with a new desk chair, or getting a new car.

After years of practicing poor posture, your back, shoulder and neck muscles will likely find standing or sitting with straight posture to be uncomfortable. This is because your muscles have grown accustomed to the slouching, and standing up straight will require some thorough stretching. That doesn't mean that once you have bad posture you can never correct it.

Working with a physical therapist to improve your posture is a great way to overcome chronic neck and back pain. In physical therapy, you will be guided through a series of stretches and strength building exercises that can help you begin training your body to practice better posture, thereby reducing your back and neck pain.

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IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE AT HOME

Of course, there are ways that you can improve your posture at home, as well. Here are several strategies that are typically helpful:

- **Try to stand tall whenever you are standing or walking.** Hold your head high and square your shoulders, but more importantly work on being the tallest version of yourself. Hunching over is the leading cause of poor posture.
- **Use support when you sit to keep your posture correct.** Lumbar support in office chairs and car seats will help a bit, but for improved posture you may need to add additional cushioning that will help you keep your back straight.
- **Be mindful of how you lift heavy objects.** Keep your shoulders square and your chest forward. When lifting something that is over 50 lbs it is important to take extra care. Lead with your hips and try to keep the weight close to your body. Lifting something improperly can lead to injury to your neck or back, which may make proper posture uncomfortable.

What can good posture do for you? There are a lot of benefits of having good posture. Aside from saying goodbye to neck or back pain, improving your posture can provide several unexpected benefits to your lifestyle and personal well-being. Here are a few of the additional benefits of having good posture:

- Proper posture creates quality exercise for your core and back
- Improved respiratory health
- Added protection for your organs, bones, joints and muscles
- Reduced risk of arthritis



If you are experiencing chronic neck and back pain, there is a good chance that it could be related to your posture. [Contact your physical therapist to learn more about how you can take steps to start improving your posture today.](#)

Call New Orleans: 504-861-4693 or St. Bernard: 504-277-6052 today to schedule an appointment!

EXERCISE ESSENTIALS

TRY THIS EXERCISE TO IMPROVE POSTURE & BALANCE

BIRD DOG 4-POINT ARM & LEG RAISE

Begin by placing your knees and hands on the floor, with your hips and shoulders at a 90° angle. While keeping stable and engaging your core muscles, lift one arm and an opposite leg straight out toward the horizon, with your thumb pointed to the ceiling. Place both arm and leg back down to starting position. Repeat 10 times and then repeat this exercise with the opposite arm and leg. To build stability, this exercise can first be performed using only the arm or leg, and the opposing arm or leg can be added once ready for progression.

 SimpleFit Pro



Always consult your physical therapist or physician before starting exercises you are unsure of doing.



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HEART HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



Tips For Better Heart Health.

1. **Aim for lucky number seven.** Young and middle-age adults who sleep 7 hours a night have less calcium in their arteries (an early sign of heart disease) than those who sleep 5 hours or less or those who sleep 9 hours or more.
2. **Keep the pressure off.** Get your blood pressure checked every 3-5 years if you're 18-39. If you're 40 or older, or if you have high blood pressure, check it every year.
3. **Move more.** To keep it simple, you can aim for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week of moderate exercise. Even if you exercise for 30 minutes a day, being sedentary for the other 23 1/2 hours is really bad for your heart.
4. **Slash saturated fats.** To help your heart's arteries, cut down on saturated fats, which are mainly found in meat and full-fat dairy products. Choose leaner cuts and reduced-fat options.
5. **Find out if you have diabetes.** Millions of people don't know that they have this condition. That's risky because over time, high blood sugar damages arteries and makes heart disease more likely.

DO YOU HAVE A SWEET TOOTH? DARK CHOCOLATE CAN BENEFIT YOU!

With the holiday season in full gear, we know that sweet treats will be the focus of many. When enjoying your holiday desserts, keep in mind that dark chocolate actually has a lot of health benefits – much more than milk chocolate.

What can dark chocolate do for me? A bar of dark chocolate is actually more nutritious than you may think. If it has a high cocoa content, then it will also contain a good amount of soluble fiber and minerals. The bioactive compounds found in the cocoa of dark chocolate have also been known to improve blood flow and can help lower blood pressure. In turn, increased blood flow results in higher brain function, allowing you to stay sharp during the holiday season. Additionally, dark chocolate actually has a variety of powerful antioxidants – even more so than some fruits!

Dark chocolate and pain relief. Perhaps one of the most important benefits of dark chocolate is that it can help relieve pain – seriously! The improved blood circulation that dark chocolate brings is a natural pain relief remedy. When blood is circulating efficiently through the body, it prevents muscles from becoming tight and resulting in discomfort. The act of eating chocolate also releases several “feel-good” hormones in your body, which naturally eases pain. So, you get the benefits of feeling good eating a sweet treat AND relieving pain in your body!

Want more health information? FYZICAL New Orleans has you covered! Of course, like any sweet treat, dark chocolate is best enjoyed in moderation – this is the most effective way to enjoy the benefits. If you have more questions about nutritious ways to stay healthy this holiday season, don't hesitate to contact FYZICAL New Orleans today! We'll be more than happy to provide you with tips and tricks for improving your health!



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Happy Valentine's Day from your FYZICAL New Orleans & St. Bernard team!



PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT!



I'm able to sleep better with no pain.

"My experience here at FYZICAL was amazing. Before I came to FYZICAL I was in pain, unable to turn my neck all the way, and my back was in much pain. Now, I'm able to sleep better with no pain. I'm grateful to have been able to come to FYZICAL with such great friendly staff and they all are amazing! Thank you all so much." - Keshia T.



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