

Posture and pain

What is posture?

Posture generally describes the alignment of your body parts relative to each other. Posture can be dynamic e.g. your posture during a tennis serve or static e.g. your posture standing or sitting. As posture is such a broad subject this article will focus on standing posture. Assessing posture is very important as misalignment of body segments can add strain on certain body parts and result in injury or pain. Ideal posture is when the body segments line up perfectly with no deviation from the ideal (see picture left).

The most common faulty postures and their related injuries are listed below:



Scoliosis

This is where there is abnormal curvature in the spine.

Scoliosis can either be structural or functional (you've acquired it along the way e.g. carrying a heavy school satchel on one shoulder). It is important to assess children from about the age of 11 until their teens for early detection.

Scoliosis generally presents as back pain in the lower or middle back. Exercises for mild to moderate scoliosis can help correct some of the asymmetry (see picture left.)

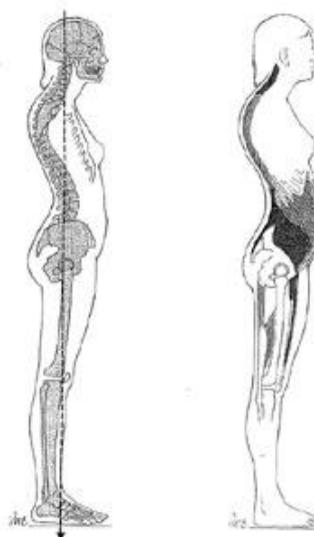
Lordotic-Kypohotic

Lordosis is an exaggerated inward curve in your lower back and Kyphosis is an exaggerated outward curve in your upper back. It is common to have either Lordosis and/or Kyphosis.

Kyphosis is often associated with people sitting hunched over a computer and tends to lead to a forward head and rounded shoulders posture. This posture may result in upper back, shoulder and neck pain or headaches.

In Lordosis it is common to have weak hamstrings and abdominals and tight hip flexors and lower back muscles which can predispose you to injury and back pain.

Stretching and strengthening the relevant muscles can have a significant effect on back pain and performance.



<p style="text-align: center;">Ideal</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Knock-Knees</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Bow-Legs</p> 	<p><u>Knock-knees and Bow-legs</u> Some faulty postures at the knees are structural and others are functional / acquired.</p> <p>It is important to assess knee postures as strain on the knee structures can be significant.</p> <p>Injuries include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osteoarthritis (wear and tear) • ITB (pain on outside of the knee) • Foot and ankle injuries • Knee cap pain
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Being aware of your posture helps solve a piece of the puzzle of why you are injured and experiencing pain. It is usually not the only reason but can be significant in your diagnosis and treatment. Is your lower back pain related to excessive Lordosis? Are your headaches linked to a rounded shoulders and forward head postures? Is your ITB a result of knock-knees?

By assessing your posture and solving the whole puzzle your treatment can focus on the cause of the injury and not simply treating the pain as a symptom.

If you have any questions regarding posture and pain, please feel free to contact me at jeanne@fourwaysbio.co.za

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