

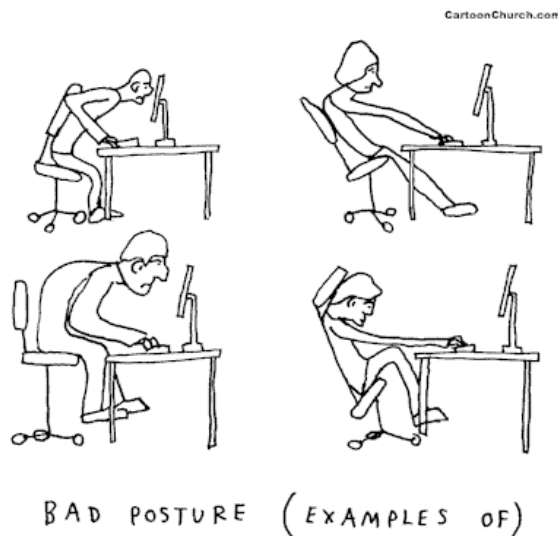
# ***Exercise, Discomfort, and Choices***

Are you avoiding exercise or your favorite activities due to pain?

We are all aware that regular exercise and/or activity (i.e., gardening, house cleaning) allow for a higher quality of life. We have more stamina and strength to do the things we like to do. For some, the motivation for exercise is more about addressing a current health issue. On the other side of the coin – many people who would like to exercise have (in their mind) a legitimate reason for not exercising - pain and discomfort. There are degrees of pain and injury. Obviously, I am not recommending that someone with a broken ankle should go running. However, I have often experienced clients avoiding certain activities because the activity is too difficult for them to do, or awkward. “Getting old” is a common reason given for avoiding specific activities; in this article I want to challenge this generally accepted response.

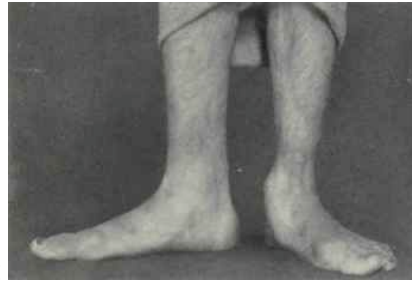
When physical discomfort is experienced during exercise or activity, it is actually a signal from your body. Your body is telling you it can no longer compensate for poor postural alignment. For example, I have witnessed numerous people walking on a treadmill and holding on for dear life! When I ask, “Why don’t you walk without holding on?” I receive the following responses: “I will lose my balance; I won’t be able to go as fast; I can’t use the incline without holding on.” If you happen to be one these people, my suggestion is to change the premise of your thinking to, “What is going on in my body that I am not able to do activity X?”

Chronic discomfort or pain let us know there is some form a misalignment, dysfunction or compensation happening due to poor posture. For example, check out the following examples of the sitting posture:

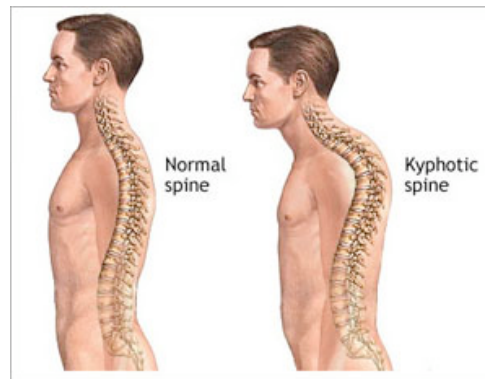


With these postures your rib cage begins to press down on major organs; your diaphragm and lungs do not expand efficiently. You can easily see how neck and back problems emerge. Your flexibility is reduced in the shoulder joint which usually results in chronic shoulder pain. Your shoulder blades will no longer adduct (move towards each other), which over time will give a person the hunch-back look. This position further affects the lower back, hip joint, and knee joints. If one joint or area of your body is not functioning in the way it is designed, it affects the rest of the body. Often, where you’re feeling the pain IS NOT where the problem lies.

Your body is designed to move and to maintain right angles at each of the eight load joints (shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles). Poor posture leads to weakened and tight muscles, strained ligaments and joints. If you have any of the following posture misalignments, injury, pain and discomfort are very likely coming your way – if they are not already present:



I. Everted and/or flat feet



II. Kyphosis of the spine



III. Valgus knees

What is amazing is you can do a lot to correct or improve these conditions by working with a Posture Alignment Specialist. I have seen tremendous change in working with people with various postural dysfunctions and compensations. It is a time investment on your part – and it will change your life! You will be able to do many, if not all, the activities you have been avoiding due to chronic pain. Hence, instead of avoiding activity investigate what you can do to live your life fully and without chronic pain! We only have one body...please put time into taking care of it. Your rewards will far outweigh your effort!

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