

Chiropractic – The Big Picture

It has been known for years that body posture is like a *“Window into the Shape of the Spinal Column”*. Figure 1 shows that Abnormal Posture is always associated with an abnormal spine. Body Postural problems aid the doctor of chiropractic in identifying a variety of dysfunctions in the spinal column. Abnormal Postures can cause or relate to a number of health problems. Abnormal Posture causes increased force and pressure on the muscles, ligaments, and bones of your spinal column. These abnormal forces (caused by abnormal posture) lead to a break down of body tissues causing pain and damage.

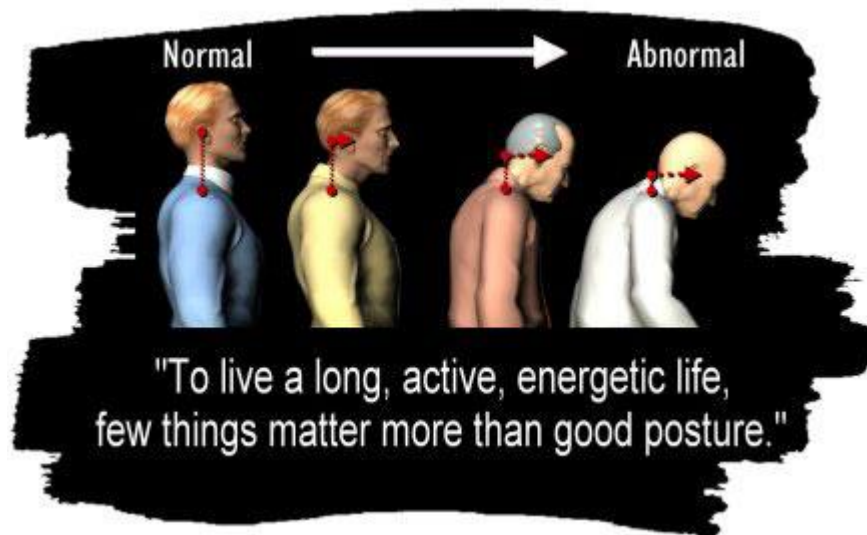
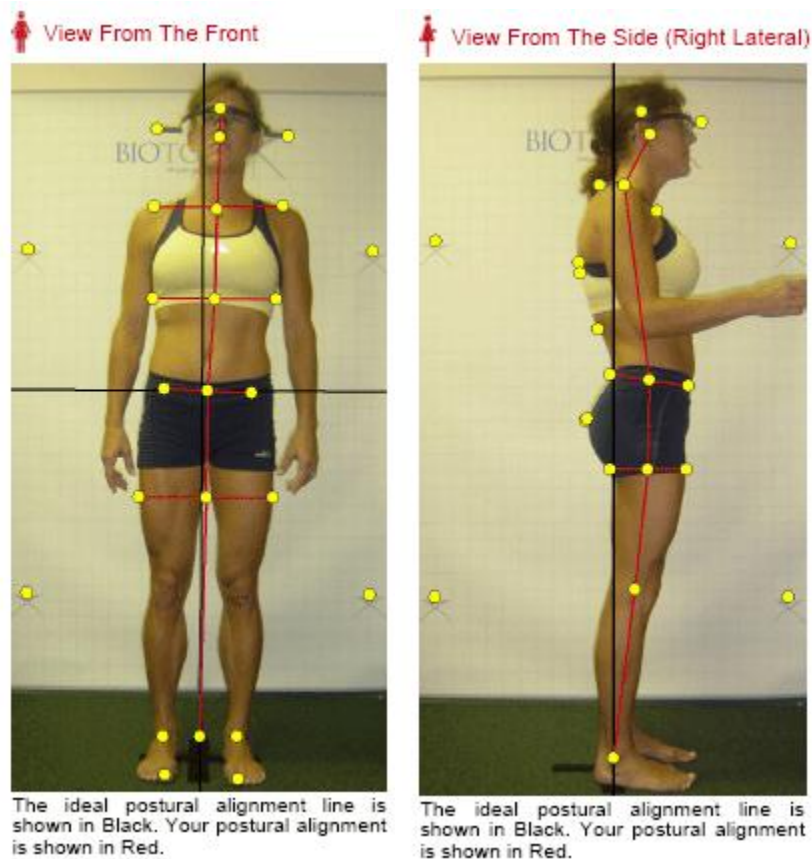


Figure 2: Postural Decay as we age.



Spinal X-rays

Many patients often ask if a chiropractor should take x-rays of their spines. The answer is simple. Properly taken spinal x-rays are like a blue print of your spine. With x-rays, the chiropractor can see how an individual spine deviates from normal alignment and we can clearly decide on appropriate treatment. Without an x-ray they would only be guessing. Would you want a mechanic to work on your car engine without looking under the hood?

For example, the figure below is a sample of common abnormal neck alignment subluxations (viewed from the side) with an estimate on average time needed to rehab such problems. It is clearly evident the further your neck is from the normal, then the longer you will need to perform rehabilitative measures. Please note that these are only generic estimates, as many factors dictate how fast a patient responds such as age, the length of time the problem has been there, amount spinal degeneration, etc.



Another important finding that properly taken x-rays will identify is spinal arthritis. Many people are not even aware that spinal disc disease and bone arthritis are developing in their spines. For many people this is a “time bomb” waiting to explode. **Figure 2** below shows an abnormal neck (viewed from the side) with arthritis in the mid neck.



Figure 2: Side view showing arthritis in the Neck

Report of Findings

The report of findings is a very important part of communication in a chiropractor's office. Before they decide if Chiropractic care is right for you, they will sit down with you (the patient) and explain the findings of the examination, posture analysis, and spinal x-rays. Many times patients tell the chiropractor that other doctors never have shown them their spinal x-rays.



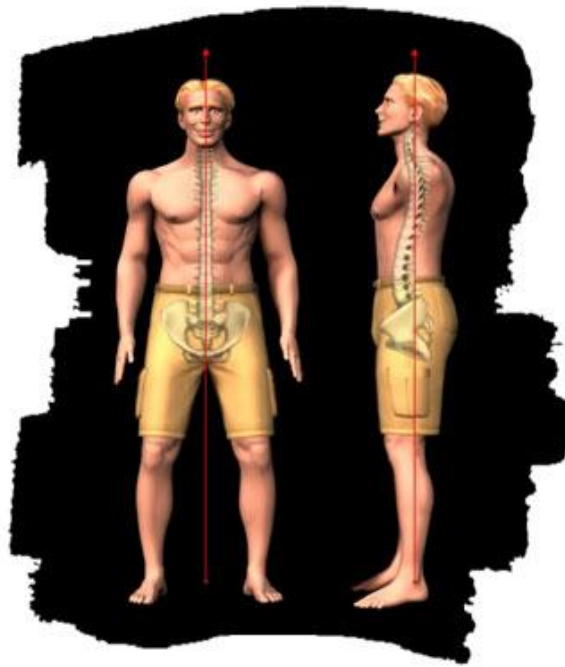
Correcting Posture

For centuries human healthcare providers have been trying to restore better posture to their patients in order to restore health. This is because postural alterations (subluxations) are known to be associated with a plethora of human afflictions from **general pain syndromes (i.e. low back pain, neck pain, headaches, etc.)**,¹⁴⁻²⁴ to problems with specific joints such as the **hip**^{25,26} and the **knee**,²⁷ to problems with specific spinal regions such as the **flat-back syndrome (loss of normal low back curve)**,²⁸ and **cervical kyphosis (reversal of normal neck curve)**,²² to local organ ailments such as **uterine prolapse**,^{29,30} **gastric herniation**,³¹ and **respiratory function**,³²⁻³⁴ to **thinking**,^{33,35} and even to **morbidity and mortality**.³⁶⁻⁴² That is correct, better postured people live longer.

* **THE PROBLEM** - Why so many have given up on restoring posture is that until recently, nobody knew how to achieve it! This is why so few doctors and therapists assess and treat posture. Even the few who do 'assess' and attempt to 'correct' bad posture with various methods usually, ultimately fail.

What is Normal Posture?

Just as there are normal values for heart rate, blood pressure, and any other physiological parameter, there is also a normal standing posture and spinal position. The normal posture is one that has the head, rib cage, pelvis and feet aligned and balanced upon the other, both from the front and side views. Your posture is the 'Window into your Spine' as it is inside of your posture and responsible for its alignment. The spine should be straight and vertical from the front. From the side the spine should have normal alternating curves to allow for normal pain-free, maximal range of motion and movement.



NORMAL/IDEAL POSTURE

From the front the posture is symmetric and the spine is straight. From the side view, the head, rib cage, pelvis and feet are vertically balanced. The spine has essential curves in the side view. These curves have specific normal angles that can be measured from x-rays.

What is Abnormal Posture?

As seen in the pictures below there are many abnormal postures. There can be a shifting off of the midline or a turning around the midline. All these postures need to be ruled out for proper treatment.

ABNORMAL POSTURES

These are all the abnormal postures possible. Each picture represents a simple deviated postural alignment, most patients come in with several abnormal postures and even combinations of more than one per area (i.e. forward head and side-shifted head-first and third pictures from top left). The left side represents shifting (translated) postures, the right side represents turning (rotated) postures.

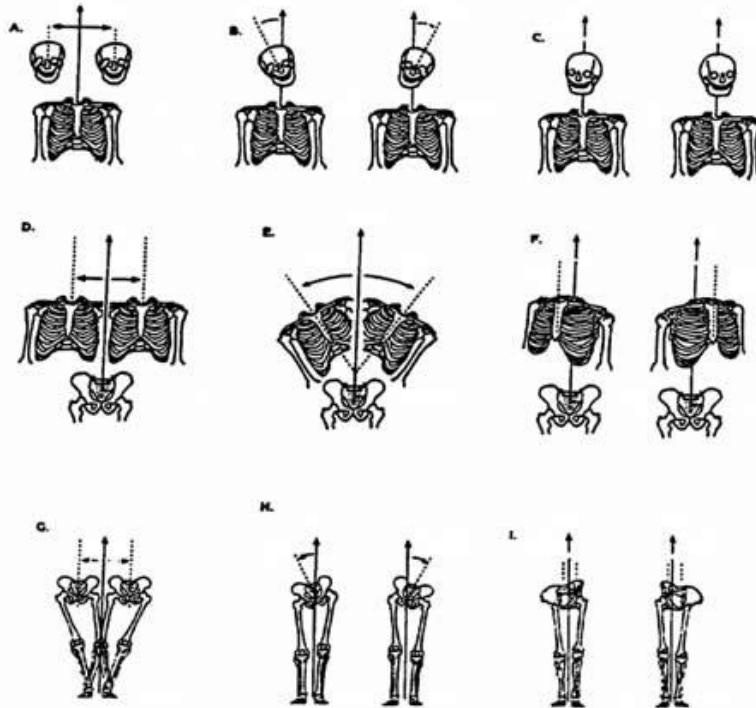
Q: How would one correct your postural deviations without doing this analysis first?

A: Chances are your problem(s) have been overlooked and undiagnosed – therefore, untreated and still present!

Do A Self-Test

Self Test: To perform a simple self-test, stand in front of a full-length mirror. Close your eyes and nod your head backward and forward a couple of times and stop in your neutral or comfortable position. Open your eyes without moving any body part.

LOOK FOR ANY OF THESE DEVIATIONS IN YOUR SPINE AND POSTURE:



- Top left pic: Is midline of face centred over the neck and shoulders?
- Top center pic: Is your head vertical?
- Top right pic: Do you see both ears equally?
- Middle left pic: Is there equal space between your arms and body?
- Middle center pic: Is one shoulder higher than the other?
- Middle right pic: Is one shoulder/arm more forward than the other?
- Bottom left pic: Are your hips centred over your feet?
- Bottom center pic: Are your hips level?
- Bottom right pic: Is one hip forward than the other/one buttock further back than the other?

***If there are any deviations, you may have a serious problem waiting to express itself – Remember: Symptoms are usually the last to show up!**

How Does Chiropractic Correct Posture?

We use a multi-modal approach that includes exercises, adjusting, and postural traction. All of these are performed using the 'Mirror Image' concept. This simply means to reverse your specific bad postures. By reversing the bad posture we are able correct your bad posture: Exercise the weakened and shortened muscles, Adjust the spine and posture, Traction or stretch the body back into normal alignment.