

# **The Benefits of Better Posture**



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# Introduction

Our posture is a complex of personal and cultural factors

We always hear that it is good to pay attention to our posture to avoid having health problems. So, let's try to stand with your back straight, your shoulders broad, your belly in and your chest out.



But is all this enough to be able to say that you have a correct posture? Unfortunately, not. If you have ever done exercises to improve your posture in the gym, you will have realized how many parts of the body are involved and how many muscles need to be strengthened to avoid back problems or other problems.

But what is this posture specifically? It is the personal adaptation of the person to the physical, psychic and emotional environment. That is, the way we react to gravity. It is a very complex whole, which involves different structures among them, including:

- the central and peripheral nervous system;
- the eyes;
- the feet;
- the skin system;
- muscles and joints;
- the inner ear.

Each of these systems is in communication with the central nervous system. This uses the information received to become aware of the position of the body. In order to be able to correctly react to what is required and necessary towards the external world and itself.

Far beyond the simple attitude we take when we walk, posture is the result of several factors: hereditary, personal, cultural as well as our physical and emotional traumas.

Our lifestyle, the type of work we do, stress, the way we stand, where we breathe and act with others also intervene on the posture.



## Why it is so important to have a better posture?

Muscle and joint pains, headaches and circulation problems. Did you know that these and other disorders

can be linked to incorrect posture? Keeping the spine well aligned means protecting the health of the whole body.

A good position, standing or sitting, promotes the well-being of the body and makes us more open to the world around us. Here are ten reasons to always maintain a correct posture.

### **Breathe better**

Being aware of your posture, especially when sitting, in order to improve it, contributes to easier and open breathing. Breathing is an involuntary act, but this does not mean that it cannot be improved. When we sit correctly, with the back straight, the brain receives more oxygen (with an increase of about 20%). The increase in oxygen supply helps us improve creativity.

### **Open the heart**

Yoga and meditation plan to sit in positions where the back must be perfectly straight. With a correct posture, the heart is more open. The muscles and ribs are not folded inward and, energetically, this promotes good feelings. Along the spine, at the level of the heart, is Anahata, the chakra linked to empathy, love for others, forgiveness and compassion. Improving the posture of the spine allows one to receive the benefits linked to the correct functioning of the heart chakra, to benefit from greater openness to others.

### **Eliminate back pain**

Very often back pain is caused by incorrect posture. One of the most common problems concerns the unbalanced distribution of weight between the two sides of the body. Sitting with your back straight and maintaining a balanced position during the day allows you to relieve and prevent back pain and many of the disorders related to it.

## **Enhance self-esteem**

Sitting and walking with good posture for your back improves self-esteem and self-awareness. It offers a broader view of the world around us and allows us to focus on and extend ourselves to the objects and people around us. We will have a more open perspective on the world and our senses will be sharper and work better.

## **Improve circulation**

Some circulation problems could be caused by incorrect posture. Being aware of your position is the most effective way to improve blood circulation. If the back is curved, some blood vessels may be in a compressed position. By adjusting the posture, their openings are increased and the flow of blood present in the body is improved.

## **Decrease muscle fatigue**

Spending a lot of time in the wrong position can strain your muscles and cause pain. Maintaining a correct posture means training the muscles to counteract the action of gravity. Be as ergonomic as possible. If the posture is incorrect, the muscles will become fatigued and tension and pain will arise. Yoga is an excellent solution to dissolve muscle contractions and improve the situation.

## **Extend the movements**

Sometimes the incorrect posture can lead to a permanent lengthening or shortening of the muscle groups. For example, remaining bent over the desk all day, the muscles at the stomach level are compressed and their mobility risks being compromised. Stretching will allow for wider and extended movements.

## **Relieve headaches**

At first glance the two problems may appear very distant. The truth is that an incorrect posture can cause headaches, with particular reference to the pain caused by muscular tension in the neck, shoulders and back. Maintaining a good sitting posture reduces the appearance of the disorder.

## **Reduce injuries**

Injuries can sometimes be caused by incorrect posture. We refer mainly to athletes or those who train by attending a gym. Doing the exercises while maintaining an incorrect posture can be harmful to the muscles. It can also cause pain and tension. It is therefore always

good to check the alignment of the spine even during exercising.

### **Prevent joint pain**

Over time, incorrect posture can lead to joint problems. Osteoarthritis, for example, can be caused by improper alignment of body bones. When this happens, the ligaments and tendons are under stress, as are the joints themselves. Those who manage to maintain a correct posture from an early age reduce the risk of joint problems in adulthood.

## Some easy exercises to get a better posture

### Twist

This gentle twist is amazing to detox your body and stretch your back. It is one of the easiest twists so you can use it to deepen your practice while activating your digestive system and relax the tension you have in your back and shoulders.



- Sit on the mat with legs stretched forward and straight back.
- Slowly slide your left foot under your right hip to the exterior of your right hip with your foot, leaving your left leg on the ground.
- Cross the right leg with the left and rest the right foot to the ground, on the outside of the left leg. Your right knee should point up to the ceiling.
- Hold your right hand on the floor, behind your buttocks, and push it toward the ground. Exhale and simultaneously rotate the trunk to the right
- Support your left knee to your right knee pointing toward the ceiling and hold your hand up or you can stretch your arm along the leg and rest your hand on the foot
- Now try to approach the torso and right thigh. Keep the straight spine and the elongated neck.
- Turn your head and turn your gaze to the right, beyond the right shoulder. During inspiration raise the sternum during the exhalation. Try to turn back a little more. Make sure the rotation is spread over the entire length of the column and not just concentrated in an area. Take some deep breaths into the posture and then release.

## Cat and Cow little sequence



This is a dynamic sequence and it is practiced with a continuous movement.

Basically, the position of the cat is only considered when the back is bent down and the chin is up. The other one is with the back raised upward and downward looking, the cow's position.

- First of all, go on all fours. Make sure your hands are right underneath your shoulders and the same width. Even the knees should be under the pelvis and as wide as the hips. The head should be in neutral position and the weight of the body exactly distributed between the legs and arms.
- Now, with deep inspiration, begins to bend your back by pulling down, raising your torso and finally lifting your chin upwards. Remember to keep your shoulders away from your ears and your chest open.
- Subsequently, during exhalation, first straighten your back and then continue the movement by lifting the center of the spine and forming a sort of "hump." At the same time bend your head down, bringing your chin to your throat and trying to look at your navel.
- Now you can restart the cycle just described in the inspiration / look up and exhale / look down. Try to do everything gently and at the rhythm of your breath.
- It is all up to you to decide how many times you want to repeat this session of movements.

## Extended triangle pose

This posture increases strength and stability in the legs, reduces stress and allows one open the chest. You should do this only after you have warmed up your whole body.



- Inhale deeply and move the legs apart to a width of about one meter. Raise your

arms sideways to the same height as the shoulders and position them parallel to the floor with palms facing to the ground.

- Turn the right foot 90 degrees to the right. The left foot should only be turned inwards slightly. Both legs should remain elongated during the rotation of the feet. The two heels should be aligned.
- At this point do a deep exhale and bend to the right, trying to keep your back erect. It is normal to lift the back hip slightly. Sometimes the hip comes forward. Try not to let this happen. It is better to counteract this movement and bring it backwards.
- The palm of your right hand should touch the mat. Initially it is fine even if it does not touch. You can support it by placing it either on the ankle or on the shin. You can also use a yoga block. You should reach your limit of muscle extension, but do not overdo it.
- At this point, raise the other arm. It needs to be in line with either the shoulders or the arm that touches the ground.
- If you can turn your head and look up. Turn your palm up, look at a fixed point in front of you.
- Keep the posture half a minute to one minute. Repeat everything from the other side.

## Cobra pose

This posture is perfect for eliminating problems in the spine and neck.

It is called this because it reminds one of a cobra in attack position. This is a fundamental



pose in yoga as it represents the starting position for all backward bending. It is a perfect yoga position for beginners and anyone who is not so flexible.

- Lie on the ground with your belly and face pointing down.
- Stretch your legs by keeping them together and stretching your toes, holding your toes to the ground.

- Hold hands right under the shoulders. Keep the elbows near the sides of the body and not wide.
- At this point, push your hands to the ground and lift your chest. While lifting, try to push the hips to the ground. If you need to, tighten your buttocks slightly but not too much. They will help you to lift your chest.
- While raising the chest do not allow the shoulders to collapse and bend. Keep them open. You can help by activating the shoulder blades and pushing them towards the center of the back.
- The thrust of your arms should not be too strong. You must try to bend back as much as your body allows you. Do not push too much. In addition, bending should be well distributed across the back.
- If you cannot go too far, go back to where you can (low cobra position), it's fine with the elbows relaxed on the ground (Sphynx's Pose). Always remember to stay within your limits.
- Once you've reached your bending limit back, if you can, lift your head back and look up, otherwise look forward. Always remember not to contract the neck too much.
- At this point keep the pose for a few seconds, up to a few minutes, breathing deeply. Of course, the longer you can be in the pose, the more benefits you will experience.
- Finally, gently relax your arms and slowly exit the position. Rest for a few seconds lying on the mat, before continuing with the practice.

## How to use resistance bands for a better posture

Stretching is a discipline which is very important. It is really suitable for anyone. Everyone can practice it according to their physical condition. One can note, over time, constant improvements and being able to gradually perform even the most challenging poses. One can always adapt to different levels. With time and constant practice, flexibility improves and it is possible to go deeper and deeper into different positions. To do this we can take advantage of the possibilities offered by the band, precisely.

The ideal is a band of soft and flexible material that allows you to adjust its length.

The band helps us to work with the muscle extensions and joints allowing you to reach the position both when we cannot do it with the help of the hands, because they still do not complete the position, both when you need to pull your legs or arms to go deeper.

Let's look at some exercise to get started with your band!

### Forward bends with the band in sitting positions

The band can be used for forward bending, but when seated. In fact, if our back is not sufficiently loose to allow us to touch our feet with our hands, it is here that, passed around the feet and taken with our hands will allow us to hold a better posture in a more comfortable way.



### Backward bends with the band

Another way to use the band concerns the backward bending. You can do these you're your feet on the ground or lying on the ground. Often this type of pose sees the involvement of the lower limbs and, in this case, the band engages them.



## Other yoga exercises with the band

The band can then be used for various other types of exercises. For example, to open your chest, stretch your arms and get a better stretch wherever you are.

You can even use it to stretch your arms, back or legs after a workout or simply after a long day working at your desk! Your band is handy and definitely easy to bring everywhere you are going!



## Conclusion

I really hope this eBook is a helpful guide to understand the importance of a better posture and how to improve your posture in an easy and practical way. These are simple exercises, available to everyone, that are no longer than 15 minutes. You can do them every day, or 3 times a week and get benefits.

In fact, it helps to get into the habit of taking care of your body. For some, these exercises are too simple. Remember that going back to basics can always provide benefits. These benefits can be:

- less joint pain
- less tiredness
- less difficulty in movements
- probably, tone of the hour improved



So, don't waste time, start now!