

# 6



## Things You Can *Stop* Doing For Better Posture

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restorative bodywork + movement

Elegance is usually confused with superficiality, fashion, lack of depth.

This is a serious mistake: human beings need to have elegance in their actions and in their posture because this word is synonymous with good taste, amiability, equilibrium and harmony.

~ *Paulo Coelho*

# Note:

The information in this ebook is not meant to replace or negate medical advice.

It is offered with the assumption that you will take responsibility for your health care decisions through awareness of your own capabilities and limitations, your own research and in partnership with your health care professionals.

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6 Things to *Stop* Doing for Better Posture



# Posture.

Just mentioning the word usually triggers a response – a bit of self-consciousness, an attempt to thrust those shoulders back and sit up a little straighter, too often followed by some frustration with how hard it is to keep remembering to do this before one finds themselves slumping again.

## Is this you?

You're not alone, as evidenced by a quick Internet search revealing the overwhelming multitude of tips, tricks and exercises to help you 'achieve' this elusive and desired state.

## What's up with that?

**I'm Gina Loree Bryan, shiatsu practitioner, movement teacher, and co-habitant of yours in a world where gravity seems to get the better of all of us.**

Over a decade-plus of practice, it became clear to me that most of my clients were dealing with symptoms related to 'posture'... much of which I believed did not (yet) have to be addressed medically.

But I felt at a loss to offer something more practical and effective than the standard recommendations (*especially since they eventually came back to, 'just remember to sit up straight'...*).

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Then I found Katy Bowman, a biomechanist and exercise teacher, who pointed out what should have been painfully obvious: *That our posture is reflective of everything that we've been doing and not doing over a lifetime.*

Meaning, unlike our more 'primitive' counterparts (*ancient and modern hunter-gatherers, and other humans living closer to nature*) we've been doing a lot of a few repetitive movements, and little to none of a great many more unique and novel movements.

## **My intention for writing this...**

Attaining good posture, while a concern for many, is still probably a less inspiring fitness goal than sleek, toned muscles or the ideal heart rate.

But, as you'll see, it's part and parcel of how the body parts are working together supportively as a whole, which underpins the optimal functioning of all movement ... including healthy muscle, visceral organs, circulation, and more.

### **What follows is, of course, just a tip of the iceberg.**

But, there are three important ideas – in addition to the six things we're going to learn to stop doing – that I hope you'll come away with:

**One:** Why 'good posture' is something that can happen naturally, and not something you need Herculean efforts to achieve;

**Two:** Why it seems so hard for good posture to happen naturally, when slumping actually feels more natural (*hint: because of other things that are also 'happening'...*); and,

**Three:** What we even mean by 'posture'.

So, let's start there:

## **What do we even mean by 'posture'?**

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6 Things to *Stop* Doing for Better Posture

# Posture is ...

**...one of those words we use so often that, of course, we all know what we're talking about.**

*"It's, you know, how we sit and stand... and, um, stuff."*

Okay, so, maybe your understanding is a little more specific than that.

If I were to ask you, *okay, then, what is 'good posture'?*, you might use words like, *upright, straight, stacked*, and again, demonstrate with your body what it looks like.

**Just for fun, let's refer to some 'official' definitions.**

Here's Vocabulary.com's entry for 'posture': *"the arrangement of the body and its limbs"*.

Simple enough. And, really not good or bad. Just an arrangement.

**So, what defines 'good' posture?** There really isn't an entry for 'good posture', so let's refer to 'alignment' - which, while often used synonymously, really isn't.

Merriam-Webster says alignment is *"arrangement in a straight line, or in correct or appropriate relative positions"*.

This is a little more helpful, but it will be even more so when we know what 'correct or appropriate positions' means, other than just the implication that there's some objective standard we're trying to adhere to.

Again, I think most of us believe we do know, as demonstrated by the way we pull the shoulders back, the chest up, the stomach in whenever we try to *do good posture*.

However, there may be a difference between what we think *good posture looks like* and *what it actually is*, biomechanically speaking.

This is important, because if you're seeking the health benefits of better posture – and I assume you are – you need to know a bit more about what you're dealing with.

**One more definition of posture**, from [medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com](http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com):

*“...the placement or maintenance of body structures in their proper anatomical positions;”*

Again, do you know what '*proper anatomical positions*' are?

**Continuing:**

*“...an attitude of the body...”*

Hmm, interesting terminology for a medical dictionary.

**And then:**

*“Good posture cannot be defined by a rigid formula; it is usually considered to be the natural and comfortable bearing of the body in normal, healthy persons.*

*This means that in a standing position the body is naturally, but not rigidly, straight, and that in a sitting position the back is comfortably straight...*



*Good standing and sitting posture helps promote normal functioning of the body's organs and increases the efficiency of the muscles, thereby minimizing fatigue.”*

Soooo, ‘naturally, but not rigidly straight’, and/or “comfortably straight.”

### **Any clearer?**

Maybe these confusing descriptions are part of the reason (*in addition to the habits we’ve incurred that prohibit our bodies from a 'natural comfortable bearing'*) that we have so much trouble with this concept.

### **Let's break this definition down a bit, and see if we can't glean a little more insight.**

**One**, I would agree that ‘good posture’ is not a rigid formula or a static state.

It’s dynamic and plays into everything we do with our bodies. One experience of good posture is a ‘*natural and comfortable bearing of the body*’ ... but the question is, how do we get there?

If I’m hearing my clients correctly, trying to maintain good posture is anything but comfortable after two and a half minutes, and quite frankly, slumping feels a lot more comfortable than trying to stay up straight.

So, **two**, it may be helpful to understand that the economy of the body is to adapt to what it's doing most frequently, thereby conserving resources for other functions.

Most of us have spent a lot of our lives in more or less a 'chair' shape – from school to work to dining to waiting to lounging to transportation to bathrooms, and in those chairs (and car seats and couches), our internal 'upright support mechanisms' have not had to work so much.

The economy of the body is to adapt to what it's doing most frequently, thereby conserving resources for other functions.

Deciding that, 'okay, I'm gonna start paying attention to my posture and sitting more upright', is great – but, essentially, you're trying to overwrite a program with a few moments of awareness that's been years in the making.

As soon as your attention goes elsewhere, the body goes back to the path of least resistance – especially if it's fatiguing. So, it's not laziness on your part – it's your body doing what it's meant to do: *economize*.

**Does that mean you're doomed to a life of slumping? *Not necessarily.***

**Three.** This: *“Good standing and sitting posture ...increases the efficiency of the muscles, thereby minimizing fatigue.”*

Yes. It is true that proper biomechanical alignment - once we know specifically what that means - will allow for the most efficient use of your muscles. This will also promote optional functioning of organs, blood and lymph circulation, free movement of joints *and all kinds of groovy things*.

But, likewise, **it's also the efficiency of the muscles that allows for good standing and sitting (and everything else) posture.**

**My husband - also a bodyworker - and I define posture as a *relationship* - between us and whatever we're interacting with.**

At the most basic level, posture is the relationship between all of our body parts as a whole, and gravity.

Alignment would be the optimal relationship between all those parts, so that as a whole, *we're supported within gravity*, and not constantly working against it.

Lastly, **four:**

**Efficiency of the muscles is characterized by:**

*~ their ability to generate force in their active state; and,*

*~ to maintain a slight, continuous contraction and electrical charge in their resting state (otherwise known as 'tonus'), **not** to be confused with continuous tension, which will inhibit the efficiency of a muscle to do either of the above.*

**And this, my friend, is where we (finally!) begin the book.**

What follows are six of the most common chronic holding patterns that may be preventing your muscles from functioning efficiently and allowing for your whole body to participate, not just in elegantly supporting you in an upright fashion, but in all of your movements throughout life.



## **Quad clenching.**

**I am often asked does this mean 'locking the knees'?**

To me, *locking* and *unlocking* are open to interpretation because I don't think either are clearly describing what you're asking your body to do.

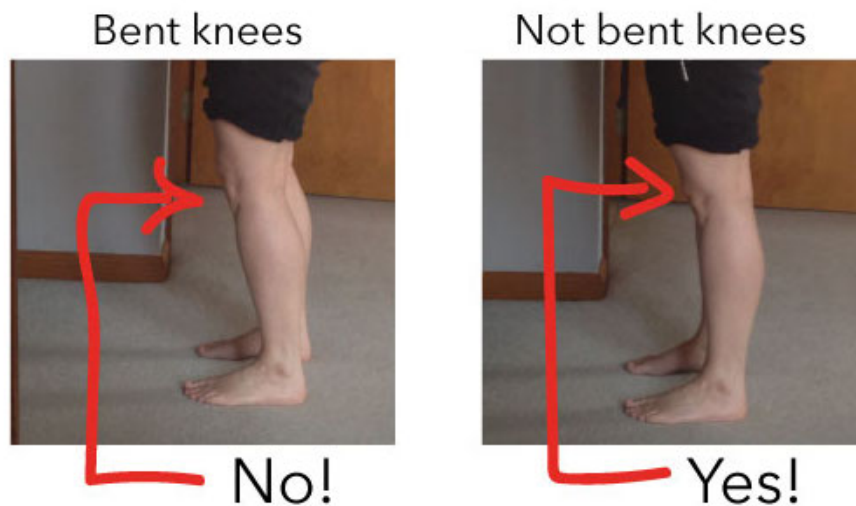
What you're after is the ability for your kneecaps to 'drop', by virtue of your quadricep muscles relaxing.

If you are trying to unlock your knees by bending them slightly, then your quads are going to clench.

## Try this:

~ **Stand up. You'll need to be in shoeless feet or super flat shoes.** (*If this is difficult due to plantar fasciitis or other foot issues, you can try using the seated modification below.*)

~ Position your feet under your hips (not as wide as the shoulders), and allow your legs to be straight, with no bend in the knees.



~ From this position, can you lift your toes off the floor? If not, shift your body weight back slightly over your heels rather than the front of your feet, and try again.

~ Can you comfortably raise your toes? *If so, great!*

If you still cannot, is it because you lack mobility in the front of your feet, or because you're feeling unsteady in that position? If it's the latter, *hold on to something lightly, if you need support.*

~ Now, if you can raise your toes, try raising and lowering your kneecaps. *Using a mirror is uber-helpful here.*

*“Wait. What am I supposed to be doing?”*



So, the quadriceps - the four big muscles on the front of the thigh - cover your kneecaps. When they contract (tighten), they pull the kneecaps up. When they relax, yep, your kneecaps will drop.

Kind of like, when you contract your forehead muscles, your eyebrows go up. Stop contracting – they go back down.

Many of us go around with contracted quads when it's really not necessary. Like when just standing upright. Or during certain phases of the gait pattern.

As a result, we create diminished knee mobility, keeping the knee cap jammed into the knee joint space, the hip flexors flexed, and bypassing the recruitment of the lateral hip muscles when we walk (*which can become a problem for hip joints, low back and balance over time*).

Perpetually bent knees can also pull the pelvis into a posterior 'tuck', which you'll learn more about later.

Some people get the quad-unclenching right away. Many more don't.

**It's ok.**

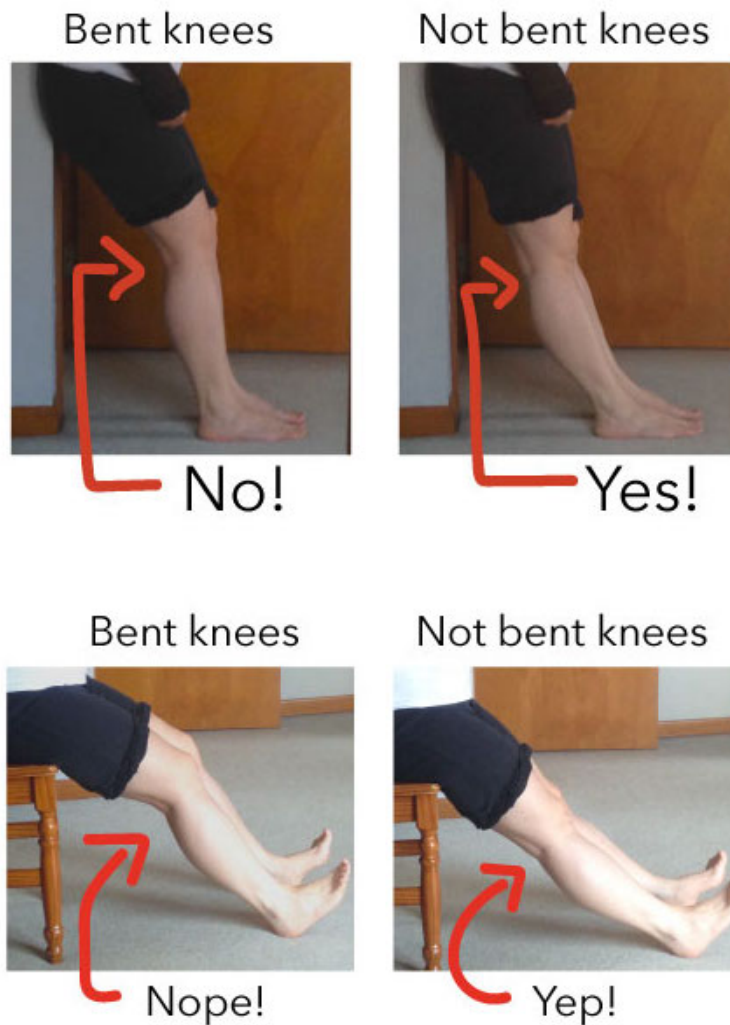
**If you find this difficult, it may be due to several reasons:**

~ You have trouble 'connecting' with your quad muscles... brain to body. This is mostly a practice thing, and again, using a mirror can help.

~ You can't **not** bend your knees, even a little, because: fully straightening the legs 'feels' wrong; you feel unstable, like you're going to tip backward; or, you don't realize that you're doing it.

As far as 'feeling wrong', unless you have actual hypermobile knees (as in, they bend slightly the 'other' way), fully straight legs are not a problem. You can try 'pushing down' through your heels slightly, to engage the muscles on the back of your thighs, which can help you and your knees feel 'supported' from behind.

In any of these cases, you can try leaning with your butt against the wall for support, your feet about a foot away from the wall, and allow your straightened legs to relax. You can also sit in a chair, legs extended out in front of you (*also good if standing without heels is difficult. See pics on the next page*).



~ You have knee issues ... maybe from a past or current injury, or you had knee surgery. It's still not impossible, but could make it more difficult.

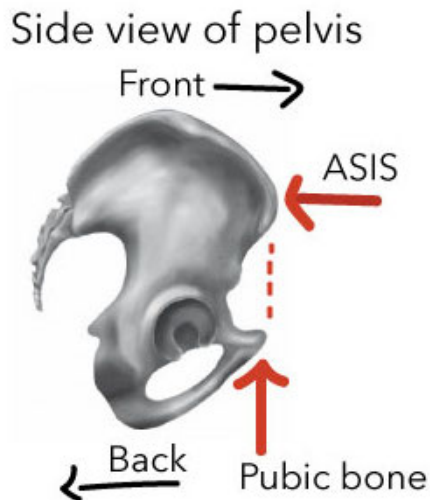
More often than not, chronic quad tightening and knee bending is a learned response, as well as a pattern developed wearing shoes *with any size heel*, as this elevation pushes your weight over the front of the feet.

**Practice this as often as you can, whenever you're standing or sitting still!**



# #2 Pelvis tucking.

An untucked (“neutral”) pelvis is defined by its two upper bony protrusions on the front (*the ASIS – anterior superior illiac spines*), and the pubic bone lining up vertically when standing.



If you've been a chronic knee-bender (*see how I put that in the past tense? because I know you're working on this!*), chances are you've also been a posterior pelvis tucker – meaning, the ASIS bones have been slightly tipped backward relative to the pubic bone.

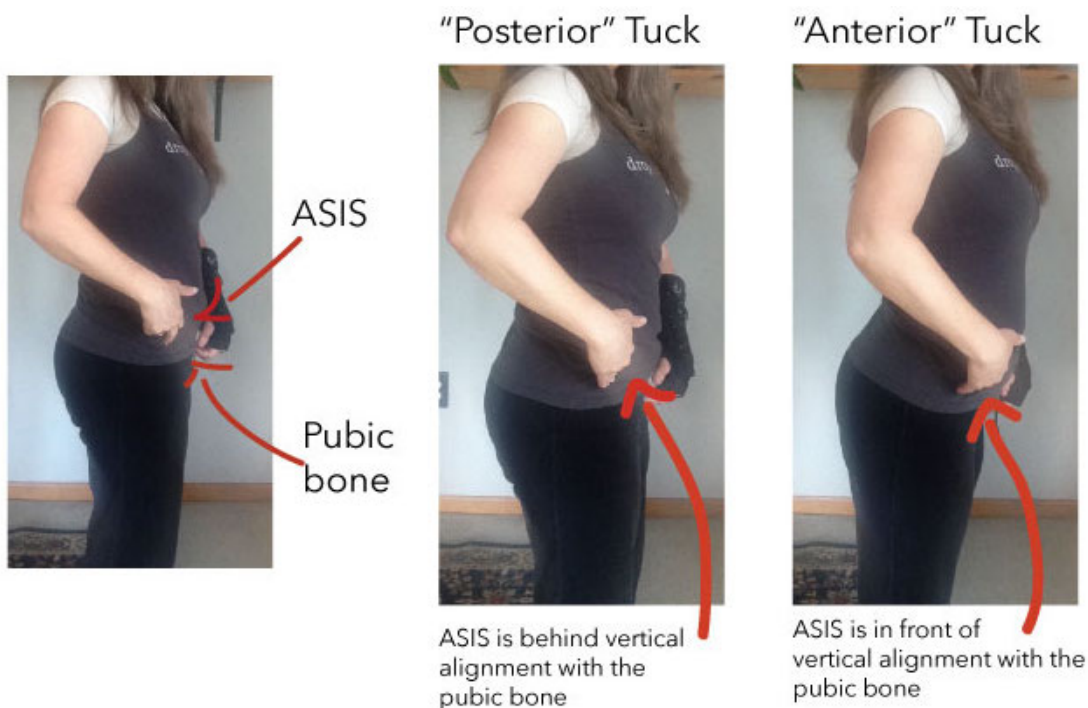
Straightening the legs can help bring the pelvis back to neutral, though it may feel at first like your butt is sticking out. This is good – as it will give your glute muscles the opportunity to engage.

An anteriorly tucked pelvis (*meaning, the ASIS bones are slightly tipped forward relative to the pubic bone*) can result from straightening the legs while your weight is out over your forefeet, and/or from sticking out your chest.

In either case, a pitched forward pelvis is likely to generate some low back compression and discomfort.

## Try this:

~ Though it may not be as clear to see, stand sideways in front of a mirror. Place one set of fingertips on your pubic bone, the other on one of your ASIS. Try the various positions on the next page and notice what you see and feel your pelvis doing .



~ Bend and straighten your legs

~ With straight legs, push your weight out over the front of your feet (*kinda making a bow shape with your back*)

~ Stick your chest out

~ Now just try standing with legs straight relaxed, pelvis stacked over the knees which are stacked over the ankles, and see if you can tip your pelvis back and forth independently of your legs moving (*meaning, without bending your knees.*)

You may begin noticing that there's a relationship between your pelvis and your knees, low back and even your rib cage. This is good information to have as you start working on your posture more deeply.

In the meantime, if you find yourself during the day with either an aching back or aching knees, check in with your pelvis.

**You may have been tucking!**

# #3 Gut sucking.

**I'll admit this is probably the hardest one for me to stop doing, because mostly, I don't wanna.**

Flat tummies are valued highly in our culture, and though I'm sure I'm not fooling anyone anymore, letting it all hang out just feels so .... *wrong*.

## ***Am I right?***

But, one word: *displacement*.

Our abdominal cavity doesn't come with extra space. It's full of stuff. And when we suck in our tummies, that stuff has to go somewhere – pressing upward onto the diaphragm, downward onto the pelvic floor, squishing all the contents together and interfering with smooth flow of the organs.

**Got heartburn? Constipation? Sneeze pees?** Much of this might be relieved by allowing space for everything to work more efficiently.

Try sucking in your gut and breathing slowly, in and out. Now, release the belly. Take another breath. *Feel the difference?*

*“But what about strengthening the core muscles?”*

**Chronic tension does not a toned muscle make.** In fact, quite the opposite. Try tensing up your bicep (upper arm) then pick up, say, a tea mug. Try it again with your muscle relaxed. *Feel the difference?*

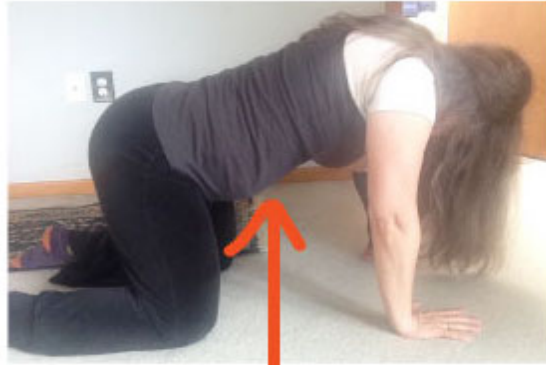
We often hear that we should have strong core muscles to support our spines, but until you can release chronic tension in the abdomen, you'll be working against any strengthening efforts you take on.

Interestingly, once your abdomen is relaxed, and you're moving more in ways that utilize your own internal support, those muscles will naturally get stronger.

### **Try this:**

- ~ Right where you are, sitting or standing, take a nice inhale in.
- ~ On the exhale, let your belly relax completely. See how far you can let it go. Depending on, well, a lot of things - habit, self-consciousness, tight jeans, the last thing you ate - *you may meet some resistance.*
- ~ To really help with this release process, get down on all fours.
- ~ Let your head and neck relax and drop down. Now, let your belly drop.
- ~ Imagine with each exhale, your navel is dropping toward the floor.

Lookit dat...



....belly!!

At first, you'll probably encounter those habitual barriers, and come to realize how tense your belly really is all the time. (And for the record, I could have dropped a lot further...)

**But, try sticking with this for about five minutes, breathing deeply and really exhaling fully.**

Hopefully, you'll discover an amazing sense of relaxation (and possibly some digestive activity) once your abdominal muscles release ... even into your back.

**\*\* A word now, from your author:** *The previous un-movement, along with the next two, are really going to start challenging your ideas about what makes for good posture.*

**So, I offer this reminder:** *when it comes to movement, we're not just trying to get from point A to point B; we're exploring **how** we're getting there.*

*If you have to force your body into alignment, that means some parts aren't participating freely. Releasing the holding patterns FIRST shows us where we really are, frees up energy, and better allows those off-line parts to come back to the party.*

*Trust me on this. \*\**

# #4 **Rib thrusting.**

**Rib thrusting is one of the most common things we do to make our posture 'better'.**

Because we associate good posture with 'sitting up straight', it seems only logical to rearrange our upper bodies in order give that appearance.

## **Try this:**

- ~ Place your hands on your lowest ribs where they meet your abdomen.
- ~ Now, do the thing where you sit up straighter. Did your ribs stick out a little more?
- ~ Try holding that position, and take a breath. Did that feel easy and deep or shallow and constricted?
- ~ Now, let your ribs sink, release your abdomen, and take in another full breath.

***Did you notice a difference?***



At this point, you may be wondering if I'm advising you to go around looking like a slumpy, pot-bellied person (*which, I'm sure you don't – you just may feel that way at first* :).

But, remember, we're going for function here, not just appearance, and if our 'posturing' is inhibiting the intake of vital oxygen, then we need to rethink that whole thing.

### **Okay, so what's happening?**

Well, we have this idea that a hunched forward posture can be remedied by straightening out the upper back. Your shoulders, being attached to the rib cage, go along for the ride, and *viola!* Better posture!

*Only, it's not quite that easy.*

Generally, we're not so much straightening out the upper back as we are taking the barrel that is the rib cage and tipping it backward.

Not only does this do little to change the the muscular adaptations of 'hunched forward posture' (*only moves them elsewhere*), but it pulls tight the abdominal muscles attached to the ribs and the pelvis, thereby restricting breathing (*as you saw above*.)

Thirdly, it creates compression and shearing of the vertebrae in the low back, leading to tightness, achiness, and potential disc issues. (*Yes, I know. Your attempts at better posture could be a factor in your back pain. Crazy, right?*)

The tricky part of rib dropping is managing it independently of your pelvis.

In other words, for many of us with tightness in the musculature of the low back and waist, it can be a challenge to drop the ribs without rounding the low back.

## Try this:

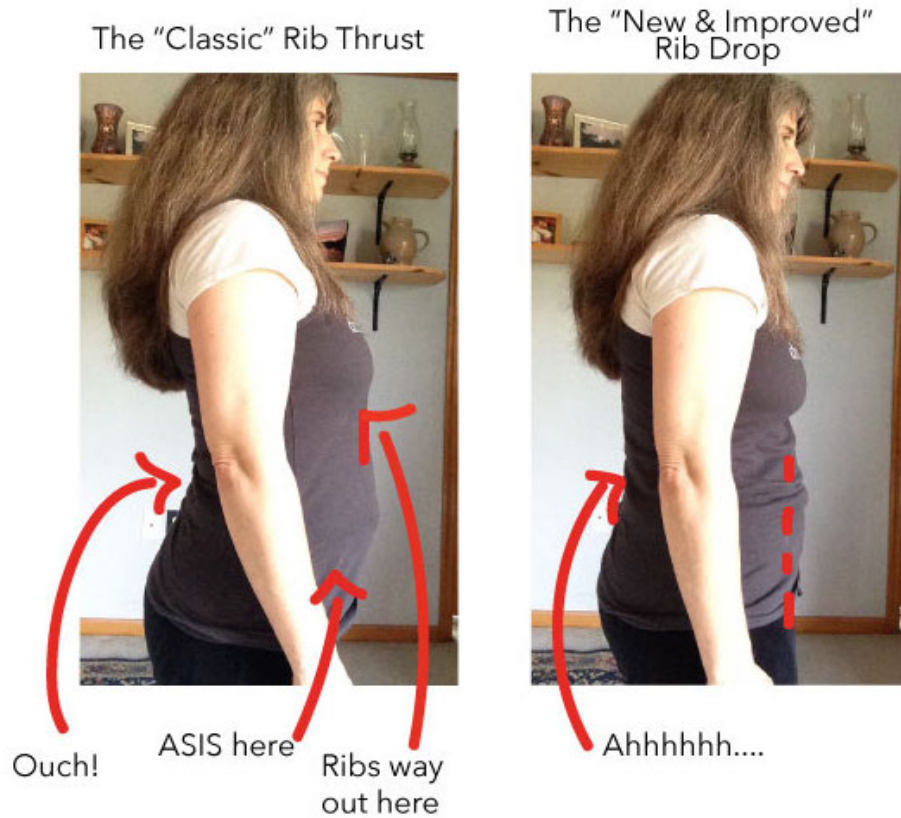
~ Stand sideways in front of a mirror. Place one hand on your ASIS closest to the mirror. Place the other on the bottom of your rib cage (*where it meets the abdomen*) on that same side.

~ With rib thrust, those ribs are gonna be way out in front of the ASIS.

~ The goal is to drop your rib cage down so those two points line up vertically (*just like with the ASIS and the pubic bone*).



Doing this may surprisingly illustrate to you how much curve you've developed in your upper back. Not to worry – this can be addressed, but we have to stop hiding the truth of what is.



~ Keep the hand that's on your bottom ribs aligned with your ASIS, and place the other on your low back. Does it feel rounded?

~ Keep your hands there and alternate between rib dropping and rib thrusting. Does your low back alternate between rounding and arching?

Can you maintain a neutral pelvis while moving your rib cage?

**If not, this is something that can be addressed with practice and specific corrective exercises.**



## **Shoulder hiking (and scrunching and...)**

**Shoulders tend to be the gripiest part when it comes to posture (along with the neck)** - the part we most want to feel relief in, but probably the hardest to change, because we have so much tied in them: *physically and emotionally*.

My shiatsu teacher, Saul Goodman, once said that the shoulders embody how we feel towards the world, and what we believe the world feels toward us. They can speak confidence, confrontation, concern, timidity, defeat.

I've heard “*I hold all my tension up there...*” more times than I can tell you, and yeah, we all do. (*Except for that one guy who told me he holds his tension in his feet. Go figure.*)

**It's the part of the body that takes it all on.**

And we rarely realize just how much until they ache.

Hiked and locked shoulders can convey some feeling of security, and, as Katy Bowman observed, be a means of shunting more blood upward to the brain when we're engaged in the myriad of problem-solving efforts.

Obviously, being able to remember to drop the shoulders (*like, all.the.time.*) is tremendously helpful, though nearly impossible without a lot of practice outside the ring, because we've basically trained the body to respond in that way.

**So... good luck with that. (*Just kidding.*)**

But seriously, remembering to let them drop when you're not in 'stress mode' can be helpful in rerouting that wiring. However, there are other posturally-related factors here, like internal upper arm rotation, that serve to reinforce the tension along the tops of the shoulders into neck. Again, certain corrective exercises can be beneficial here.

But, posturally-speaking, what I really want you to stop doing is pulling your shoulder blades back.

**Along with rib thrusting, this is another '*do good posture*' thing we all do.**

If you haven't already been thinking that I'm leading you in quite the opposite direction away from good posture, this should really nail it.

As we've seen, 'shoulders forward' are part of that hunched forward position involving the rib cage.

The musculature of the shoulder joint, upper back and upper chest have adapted to doing life mostly right out in front of us, rather than frequently employing the full range of motion of the shoulder joint - meaning there's a lot of adapted muscle and tissue contraction in the upper front of the body.

Squeezing your shoulder blades together isn't going to offer a counterstretch to those contracted muscles; it's simply going to add another chronic tension pattern to an already chronically tense area.

Granted, tension has a place. It's a means of gathering and storing potential energy... to be released as power.

**And that's where we get into trouble: *when it's not released.***

Tightness and tension block flow - whether of blood and oxygen, lymph, sensation, or *qi*. Muscle tension compresses joint space, leading to friction, inflammation, then eventually breakdown of tissue.

Letting go of these habits will feel weird, and, yeah, at first, slumpy.

But, the most effective remedy to the slumpy is to stop working against your body where it is, and then engaging it in movements that will support your upper body and head naturally.

## Try this:

~ With ribs dropped or not, draw your shoulders back the way you would when you're trying to do 'good posture'.

~ Hold this for a full minute, and take note of any sensations: your breathing, other tension patterns, etc.

~ Try it again without pulling your shoulders back. *How did that feel?*

Looks nice at first...



For me, when I try that with my shoulders pulled back, I feel a band of tightness across my chest, which in itself, makes my breathing feel more like an effort.



I also get a little sharp pain on the inside of my left shoulder blade, which I often get requests from clients to dig into. (*On them. Not on me.*)

**It's worth noting that tense muscles consume oxygen more quickly.**

If you want to test that for yourself, see how long you can hold your breath after filling your lungs to capacity. Then fill to about 80% capacity (or to a sensation of 'relaxed' fullness) and try holding again.

*Very interesting.*



## **Chin jutting.**

**When you've mastered the rib dropping (*and, of course you are, aren't you?*), you may notice that your head will now have to figure out where it's supposed to be.**

If the upper part of your rib cage is now more forward than in a thrust, your head will end up way the heck forward, and you may find yourself looking at your shoes.

Unless you tilt your head to lift your gaze upward.

But, like with the low back arching when the pelvis tips forward, when you do this, your neck bones (cervical vertebrae) will be extra curvy and compressed, and we don't want that.

**One last unattractive thing I'll ask you to do:**

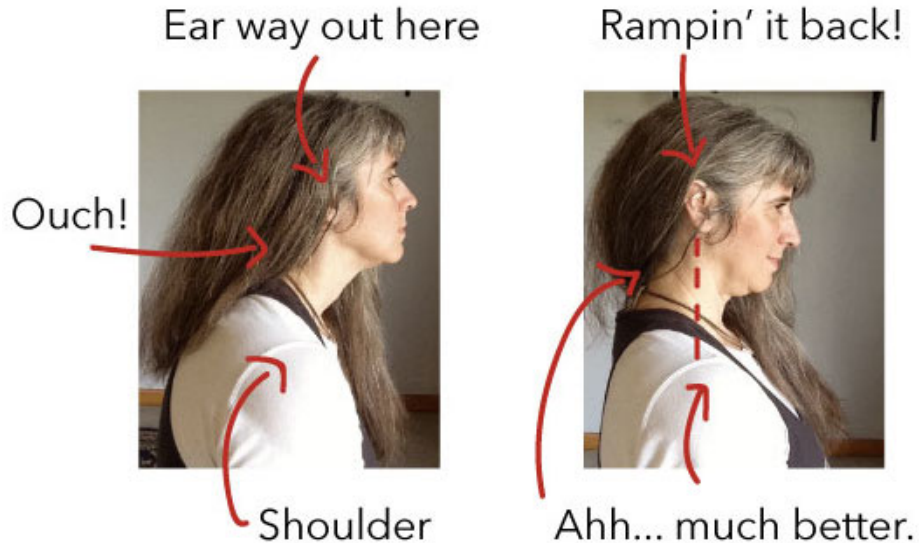
### **Try this:**

~ While dropping your ribs, also drop your chin toward your chest, lengthening out the back of the neck. You can hang here for a minute, and just allow gravity to take your head into the stretch.

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~ Now, imagine that you're drawing a line with your chin from your chest up your neck, which, in effect will give you a double chin. (Sorry!)

~ Raise your head slowly, but without changing the angle of your chin, and keeping your ears over your shoulders.



Your eyes will essentially feel like you're peering over bifocals, which means that you're doing it right. :)

**For the record, even if it was possible to go about life in this position, I'm not asking you to.**

We're basically taking each body part in these relationships - feet to legs, legs to pelvis, pelvis to rib cage, rib cage to shoulders, and shoulders to head – and reintroducing them to each other in a healthier way.

***So much tension has come between them!***

Until they can articulate properly, they'll never be able to work together harmoniously.

**And good posture is really all about the harmony.**

Letting go is as much of an exercise as doing planks, flys, crunches, and whatever else is recommended for 'good posture' – in that it requires practicing it consistently.

But, this way, you're working with your body where it is at any given moment, and with far less risk of incurring injury and further tension.

***Win, win, yes?***



**These are other areas of tension, not directly related to 'posture', but worth taking note of, especially if they're causing discomfort.**

### **Toe gripping.**

Often used as when wearing flip-flops, clogs or other shoes that would otherwise fly off your feet, or just a manner of holding on the floor for a sense of balance.

In either case, this can lead to contracted top-of-the-foot muscles, hammertoes, and general restriction in foot mobility.

### **Butt clenching.**

**Yeah. A lot of us do this, and for a variety of reasons.**

In my case, it's not a perpetual thing – only when I'm working on people on a massage table (which, until recently, I wasn't aware I was doing this!).

Maybe it's a means of stabilizing myself, but when I let it go, I have to find healthier body mechanics to support my low back as I lean over the table.

In other cases, it may be a form of self-censorship. My partner once observed that people in sales and similar work have extremely tight glute and piriformis muscles, quite possibly as a result of displacing frustration with customers, while putting on an amicable front.

Free and happy butt muscles are able to support the hip joint and the pelvic floor, so we would do well to let those babies relax.

## **Jaw and fist clenching.**

**Probably some similar roots here – unexpressed resentment and frustration.**

In the case of jaw clenching, another macrobiotic-based theory was that we're just not chewing our food well enough to give the masseter muscles enough exercise. Indeed, there seems to be a population-wide decrease in jaw and dental strength that may be related to the availability of softer and easier to manage food.

Other factors, such as parasites and craniosacral misalignments, can also be at work.

Fist clenching *could* be an unexpressed desire to wallop someone.

But, there is also a connection between what's going on in the shoulders, the forearms and the hands.

In all of these cases, noticing and relaxing can help, but will probably require a more direct means of affecting the tension long-term – perhaps a little cognitive behavior therapy.

## So, there you have it.

Again, this is just tip of the iceberg stuff, but I hope it brings a fresh perspective to your ideas of posture.

As they say, change truly does begin with awareness, and if you can begin with some awareness of these patterns in yourself, you're halfway there.

### Here are just a few ways you can bring these 'no exercising' exercises into your regular life:

~ **Move toward minimal shoes.** Simply put, proper alignment will never be yours if your ground floor is offset with heels of any height.

This can be an easy transition, or a kicking and screaming one. If you need assistance, refer to my [Happy & Healthy Feet workshops](#), or Katy Bowman's book, "[Simple Steps to Foot Pain Relief](#)".

~ **Move toward sitting without support.** Most ergonomic recommendations place your back firmly up against a chair, preferably with lumbar support. This means your core doesn't have to do anything to support your body, and now you have to go the gym to 'build your core strength'.

=> **Try this:** If you must sit in a chair, sit near the edge, feet on the floor.

Find neutral pelvis, which will mean that your sit bones will be right on the chair's surface (as opposed to your sacrum).

Build up your alignment from there: relax the abdomen, drop the ribs while stacking them comfortably over the pelvis, drop your shoulders, keep them wide, and ramp your head back slightly.

**Alignment can happen naturally when you get the base right.**

~ **Move more.** *Just more. And often.* Your body needs movement more than it needs to be in a perfect sedentary position (...of which there is none, really...).

You can cycle through all of the un-exercises illustrated above, exploring, mixing it up.

***Your body is amazing, resilient and more malleable than you think.***

***The only 'bad' posture is the one you're locked into all the time.***



## Questions? Comments?

Contact me here: [gina@embodygrace.com](mailto:gina@embodygrace.com)

Find more stuff on my website here: <http://embodygrace.com>

Follow me on Facebook here: <http://facebook.com/embodygrace>

**Stay updated on my workshops here:**

**<https://www.embodygrace.com/classesworkshops>**

Not in the Chester County, PA area? Check out Katy Bowman's dazzling array of books and online classes here:

**<https://nutritiousmovement.com/>**

(affiliate link)

**I hope you found even just a little nugget to help you move your body better.**

***As Katy says, if you can change how you move, you can change how you feel.***

6 Things to *Stop* Doing for Better Posture



**Thank you for reading. :)**