



# PARTNER UPDATE

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## WORK PARTNERS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS

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March 2017

### Proper Posture and the Importance of Ergonomics in the Work Setting

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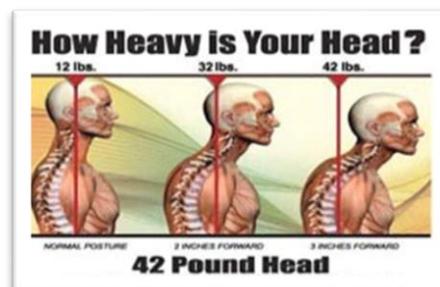
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#### **Why is posture so important in maintaining my employees' health and longevity in the workplace?**

Estimates suggest that the lifetime prevalence of back pain in occupational workers ranges from 50-84%. Work related back pain can range from the neck down to the lower back and can have serious effects on employees in the workplace. One major adverse effect is that back pain accounts for the number one cause of absenteeism among employees worldwide. Several factors can lead to back pain including: poor lifting mechanics, trunk loading, physical labor, repetitive motions, poor workstation set up, nature of the occupation, sedentary lifestyle, prolonged sitting, and improper POSTURE. Poor posture can cause an individual to obtain a work-related injury during ANY of the factors listed prior. Posture can also be one of the easiest things to be corrected with a few simple changes.

#### **Why do I have pain when I haven't had a traumatic injury?**

When an individual sits slouched in their chair or with their head in a forward position, it creates unwanted stresses on the joints, ligaments and muscles of the spine. If you sustain this position for long periods of time throughout the work day, you will eventually develop aches and pains warning you of the increased load you are placing on your joints. Over the course of weeks, months, and years of working in these poor postures, eventually these structures holding your spine upright will begin to fail. At this point, unless the posture is corrected, workers can develop long-term complications leading to missed workdays, nerve damage, breakdown of joints in the extremities, and even unwanted surgeries. In most cases, these complications can be avoided by changing position and retraining postural muscles to hold you in a better, more upright position. Take the image below, for example. For every inch your head is in a forward position, you can increase the weight of the head on your neck by 10 lbs.



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### What is achieving proper posture all about?

Adequate posture requires an individual to train their body to sit, stand, walk and work in positions that place the least amount of strain on the joints, muscles and ligaments during their work activities. Incorporating good posture into your daily routine can have several benefits, including:

- Decreases risk for arthritis by reducing the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces
- Decreases the amount of strain placed on ligaments that hold the spine together
- Reduces fatigue in the workplace by creating a more efficient position for the muscles to work, allowing the body to use less energy
- Helps move the pelvis into a neutral position allowing one to activate the core musculature better
- Allows muscles to work in the positions they are meant to resulting in less frequent muscle strains
- Improves appearance! Upright posture leads to a taller stature and improved confidence

### Quick tips to improve your posture today

- Set an hourly reminder to stand up, pull your chin back and draw your shoulder blades down and back
- While sitting, maintain a slight curve in your lower back by bringing your hips all the way to the back of the chair or placing a towel roll behind your lower back
- Exercise the 'rule of 90's'. Maintain a 90-degree angle in your elbows, hips, knees while sitting at a desk or work station
- Maintain an eye level that is 2-3 inches from the top of the computer to avoid looking down or up to view the screen
- Keep elbows close to your body and supported with armrests, with your wrists in a neutral position
- Keep your head stacked over your shoulders while working and avoid looking down to view your task at hand
- Take a break! There is no reason to sacrifice your health to complete the task at hand when you can easily stand up and address your posture
- Ask your doctor for additional information regarding treatment and therapy that can be used to address your postural pain such as: physical therapy, chiropractic care or acupuncture



[Click Here](#) for 2 minute video of WorkPartners Physical Therapy.

### WorkPartners Occupational Health Specialists

Located in North San Diego County, WorkPartners clinics are full service Occupational Health clinics dedicated to supporting the health and wellness of local employees. Learn more at [www.WorkPartnersOHS.com](http://www.WorkPartnersOHS.com).

