

# strengthening



## Cobra Stretch

This is a yoga exercise. Begin by lying on a flat surface in a face down position, with your arms close to your side and hands by your chest. Slowly lift your chin and chest as high as you can, then gently arch your back, pushing the chest outward while keeping your lower body tense and firm. Take several deep breaths before returning to the starting position.

## Pectoral corner stretch



1. Stand at a corner about 30cm away from the wall with forearms on opposite sides of the corner. One foot should be forward.
  2. Elbows should be positioned slightly below shoulder height.
  3. Lean gently in towards corner by bending the front knee until a stretch is felt in the chest.
- Hold fifteen seconds.

## Trapezius Stretch.

Gently bring your head over to one side, until you feel a soft stretch and hold it. You will feel a stretch in the opposite shoulder. Be gentle as these muscles can be very tight. Repeat on both sides.



**Strengthen:** You must first improve the way your body works before you start to challenge it. Pushing your body with challenging activity while it is stiff and dysfunctional can bring problems to the surface. This is one reason why I recommend regular chiropractic care for active people. Weakness or pain does not indicate that you need to lift more weights, it is an indication that your body needs to be stretched, balanced and checked by a professional. You should begin with treatment and stretching. However, after stretching and treatment (Not before) you can then introduce postural strengthening exercises. I have included two exercises to strengthen the postural muscles

## Pelvic tilt exercise

This can be a tricky exercise to understand. The movement is very simple and subtle but you may need



instruction to be sure you are doing it correctly. I can teach it to you during your treatment sessions. Once experienced you will be able to do it while standing. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Roll your pelvis, imagining your belly button moving toward your face. In doing **just** this (not lifting or moving yourself off the floor or changing your breathing) you should feel like your back is pressing into the floor and your stomach muscles are tightening. Hold for 10 seconds Repeat 8 to 12 times.

## Wall Posture

You may find it hard to stand flat against a wall. Hopefully this will improve with stretching and treatment. Stand with your head, shoulders and buttocks against a wall, with your heels 4-6cm from the wall. Relax your shoulders and pull in your chin. Hold for one minute or more. Once you learn the pelvic tilt, you can also flatten your back towards the wall to limit the arching your lower back



**Bad Posture**



- Excess load on your muscles and joints
- You look unhealthy
- You do not stand as tall as your genetics intended you to
- Your back pain is not as responsive to therapy
- You are predisposed to injury
- Your body fatigues/ hurts faster than it should.
- Long term hunching can lead to permanent hunching.

stretches

## Be dedicated

Hello, it's Dr Con Constantinou here, your chiropractor at C1 Chiropractic. Posture is a complex topic, as is back pain. If your back pain and headaches are persistent or your body seems to always look and feel tired, faulty posture may be contributing to your problem. People often ask me how to improve their posture. So I compiled this pamphlet. The information here is great! I will try and keep it simple. Stick with it. Especially if you are still growing. The philosophy of wellbeing is to be constantly trying to maintain and improve, not just try and "fix" problems quickly so you can forget about them again. Improve the way your body functions and try to take pressure off your problem areas. This may decrease the chance of permanent postural problems in the future. People who stand straighter look better, because they function better. By actively taking part in your rehabilitation process, you may have greater benefits than with treatment alone.



## Why do I have bad posture?

Chiropractors are trained to assess function. The shape of your body relates to how it functions. We sit a lot. We hunch, our muscles are very adaptable so they change. How many hours in your life have you spent sitting? We hunch when we drive, use the computer, work at a bench etc. It becomes a long term habit in the way your body functions. This may lead to :

**Your brain.** Position sensors in your joints and muscles help you decide that your slouching posture is normal. Maybe you don't know what it would feel like to stand straight. It might feel weird at first. Doing the following strengthening postures, such as the wall stand, may help you feel the difference between a slouch and standing straighter.

**Tight Joints & Muscles.** Certain muscles staying in a short, tight posture. Joints may also follow, stiffening up and weight wont be distributed evenly through your body. It is concentrated between your shoulders, in your neck, etc. Your head jutting forward strains your neck and shoulders.

**Muscle weakness.** Certain muscles are stretched and elongated for long periods, so they become weak and can't hold you up for long, even with extra effort. Muscle fatigue reinforces bad posture. Your poor shoulder muscles are overworked trying to support your head while it juts forward.

## What to do?

Begin by having regular therapy. You simply call and make an appointment for a time that suits you. Apart from that, follow the routine below.

**Stretch the tight muscles:** start by stretching REGULARLY. There are many options, but I have personally selected four of my favourite stretches for you.

The workout wont take long once you know the moves. First warm up by moving around for 15 minutes. Do not bounce when you hold stretches, do not force stretches or muscles may spasm, or become irritated. Then you will need therapy just to calm them down. You may want to come in and have me check you are doing them correctly.

Perform them slowly and gradually, do not rush. Good things take time. Assume the stretch position gradually and gently and then hold it for a count of 15 seconds or longer. If it hurts, back off the stretch a little, if it still hurts, abandon the stretch for another and call up for an appointment so we can isolate the origin of your pain.

Stretches



### Child's Pose

Kneel down on the floor and sit back towards your heels while keeping your arms forward. Rest your forehead on the floor. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.