

Better Movement, Better Posture

By Olena Nitefor

“Good posture” is usually believed to entail standing up straight and strengthening some critical muscles to maintain that straightness. (The muscles most often seen as being in need of strengthening are the abdominals and the back of the shoulder muscles.) If you have ever tried to achieve better posture through such means, you probably realized that it is futile, and that in fact even if you can manage to “think” about standing or sitting straight, you forget the minute you go to do something else.

So, should you simply give up on “good posture,” succumb to your slouching, let your shoulders droop and let your neck pull and ache? Is it all just inevitable aging?

I suggest you look at the photos below. The man is 75 years old and has had each of his hips replaced in the previous three years. Compare his posture on the left to his posture on the right. Before taking each photo I had asked GB to point up and to the right. Can you see that in the “before” picture he could not stand properly on his right leg, that when he tried to reach, his chest slumped and his neck got short and bunched up in the back? He looks more ready to fall or sit, than to point upward!

In the photo on the right, GB can easily stand on his right leg, his chest is upright, his neck is long and his head is balanced nicely on top of his spine and legs. Reaching and pointing are easy and he looks much younger.



These are “before” and “after” pictures of GB who received seven *Functional Integration*® lessons over a period of 11 days. The improved posture was a by-product of improving GB’s movement. GB reported that he could walk more easily and further (he gave up his cane because the pain in his left hip diminished significantly), he found himself more agile in putting on his socks, and his neck felt significantly freer when he was driving. And the postural changes that you see here, he does not have to think about and maintain consciously. Now that is dynamic and usable posture!

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