Your posture matters
Let’s take care of it together

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What is posture?

Your posture is your position when you are lying, sitting, standing or moving over every 24 hour period.

If you lie, sit and stand well, and move your body often, you will be taking care of your posture. This can:

- Help avoid muscle and postural changes.
- Help avoid acute or chronic pain.
- Help your internal body systems function as best as they can.
Why posture matters
24 hours a day

Understanding the impact of posture to the shape of your body is very important whatever your age.

Everyday activity such as using your mobile phone, sitting at your computer or watching TV can create a posture that effects your body’s natural alignment. This causes physical stress to the body which can cause pain, discomfort and even deformity of your spine.

It’s particularly important to be aware of someone’s posture if they can’t adjust their position independently. Changes in body shape can affect someone’s physical and mental wellbeing including their ability to eat, drink and breath well.

Wee Tip: don’t stay in the same position for too long.
Why your posture might change

Posture changes can make it difficult to manage without help and support.

Here are some reasons why your posture might change:

- Adopting poor habitual positions.
- Becoming older.
- An injury, disease or condition which affects the way your brain works.
- Born with a health condition or disability.

You or someone you care for could be at risk of developing unwanted postural changes. However, it’s never too late to start doing something about it.
Reducing the risk of postural change

You can reduce the risk of unwanted postural changes if you aim for a variety of symmetrical and well supported positions throughout the day and night.

Wee Tip: are there any positions you think you need to change?

You want to be as upright as you can sitting, as tall as you can standing and as stretched out as you can lying down.

Wherever you are, make sure that you are comfortable and supported.

Did you know you spend 2,500 hours lying in bed each year? This is a great time to lie well and be comfortable. You will benefit throughout the day from a better sleep.
Remember: it’s never too late to make a difference!

Fast facts

- **4.7 kg** of gravity force pushes down on you 24 hours a day.
- **600 muscles** are inside your body helping you move.
- **5** is the number of directions your spine moves in.
- **S** is the shape your spine takes naturally.

Good posture holds up the whole weight of your body.

Posture affects a lot more than just the spine.
Sitting

Size matters—aim for a well-fitting and supportive chair or wheelchair to help you participate in activities.

Wee tip: if you are having difficulty with sitting upright, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.

- **Head** supported
- **Chest lateral supports** as needed
- **Back rest** in contact with the body
- **Arm rests** at correct height
- **Thighs** supported
- **Feet** supported
Lying

Rest and play matters—how you lie overnight affects your posture during the day.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty lying stretched out, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.

- **Supportive surface** and pillows as needed
- **Avoid positions** that leave you stuck, sore or stiff
- **Use pads/cushions** to keep you stretched out, supported and comfortable
- **Change your position** more often
Standing

Stretching our muscles and loading our bones matters—stand as often as you can for as long as you can.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty standing up tall, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.

Use your **equipment as advised** e.g. wall rails, walking aids, standing frames

**Appropriate footwear and splints** can make a difference

**Be active in standing**
Walking & moving

Moving about as much as you can matters—try not to sit still for extended periods. Weight bearing activities are good for improving strength, mobility and for maintaining strong bones.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty walking, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.

**Use a walking aid** e.g. a stick. Ask someone to help you transfer into your walking aid if needed.

**Wear splints** if you’ve been given them.

**Wear supportive and well fitted footwear.**

**Never walk in socks or tights on hard floors in case you slip.**
It’s important to know when to get in touch with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist who can help you take care of your posture.

Here are some examples of what you might need help and advice with:

- You lean to one side when sitting or lying.
- You feel your leg muscles are stiff or tight.
- You need someone to help you change your position.
- You get stuck in the same position when lying or sitting down.
- You’re always uncomfortable, sore or stiff.
- Your level of independent mobility is changing.

Remember: your posture throughout the day and night will impact on the shape of your body.