



What the Neck?? The Importance of Better Posture and Body Alignment

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Imagine the following scenario: You're caught up in a riveting game of Jenga with your best friend and it's your move. You go to grab one of those tiny wooden blocks-struggling a little on the retrieval-you finally manage to wriggle it free, and just as you're gently placing it on top of the stack, the entire tower comes crashing down. You think man, I almost had it! But the truth is, the alignment was just not good enough. So, what in the world does a game of Jenga have to do with your body? Let's find out!

With the increased usage of technology and social media within the past 5-10 years, we've gotten quite accustomed to straining our neck when looking at our devices. We tilt down or lean forward when we stare at our phone, computer, iPad, Kindle, Nook, Microsoft Surface, or whatever device you own. I'd bet right now, as you read this, that your neck and head are not currently aligned above your shoulders. It's okay. We're human and our posture isn't going to be perfect all the time. It is important though that we be mindful of this in order to keep chronic aches and pains at bay.

Just like with the game of Jenga, our body will function way more effectively and efficiently if our "blocks" are in the correct alignment. According to the research of New York spinal surgeon Dr. Kenneth Hansraj, the typical head exerts 10 to 12 pounds in a normal standing position, but when the head tilts forward at a 60-degree angle, the force exerted on the spine is more than 60 pounds. What??? That is more than

quadruple the amount of weight that your body is meant to handle. The sheer amount of force that is now placed on your neck and shoulders is enough to make anyone cranky.

A pain in the neck then becomes more than just a cheeky expression. Neck pain can create an unfortunate trickle-down effect, with the exception of headaches, since those lie above the neckline. The shoulders, low back, hip flexors, hamstrings, knees, and even ankles can all be affected by that darn “tech neck.” Your posture will inevitably change in order to accommodate your head position, therefore, the better your posture, the better your body will move and feel.

The takeaway? Pay more attention to your neck position throughout the day. Fix it when you can and try to do a little better each day. Don't let your body come crashing to the ground. YOU have the power to choose how this game ends.

Take a look at Kate's 4-minute video to learn 3 lifestyle changes and 3 exercises to improve your posture and relieve “tech-neck.”

