

PROBLEMS WITH POSTURE



Today's society is plagued by postural imbalances.

So much so that statistics show that over 80% of us will experience lower back pain at least once during the course of our lives, with many of us suffering repeat episodes on a regular basis. It's never been a better time to be an osteopath, physiotherapist, chiropractor or massage therapist!

Unfortunately, even these eminently qualified and well-intentioned health care professionals will very rarely be in a position to afford much more than pain relief in the short term, as they deal primarily with the effects of postural distortion: pain, range of motion limitations etc. Simply put, the one or two visits per week with your therapist do not effectively counter the postural effects of 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This is not an attack on the complimentary health fraternity. They have a success rate so far in advance of traditional medicine that the two do not even compare! The point being made here is that in most cases of lower back pain and joint dysfunction the cause is postural and can only be corrected by the individual living 'within' the affected posture.

It's time to focus on cause rather than effect.

What causes postural distortion patterns to occur?

In a word: Life. The cumulative effects of our lives create the postures we wear. Unfortunately, modern lifestyles are about 180 degrees out of phase with the intended use of the human body.

Excessive time spent in seated postures at work, the car, the bus and in front of the TV are the main culprits here but aren't the only problem areas. Surprisingly, the much-hailed 'magic pill' of exercise shares a lot of the blame too!

Poorly designed exercise programs (that's most of them) have been shown to increase postural stress, alter length-tension relationships between opposing muscle groups and create pattern overload including repetitive strain injury, tendonitis and bursitis. Not to mention the fact that you'll probably spend half of your time at the gym sitting down!

Leg press machines, shoulder press machines, chest presses, lat-pulldowns and even exercise bikes are all designed so that you can push, pull and pedal from a sitting position. But wasn't that why most of our clients came in - to relieve their bodies from the sitting position they've been in all day?

The subject of posture and its relationship to human performance should be the primary concern of all exercise professionals who are serious about helping their clients to achieve their goals.

Posture is the very foundation of strength, power, balance, agility and endurance and as such requires close inspection before further training is prescribed - if you try to build on poor foundations don't be surprised if your building crumbles!