

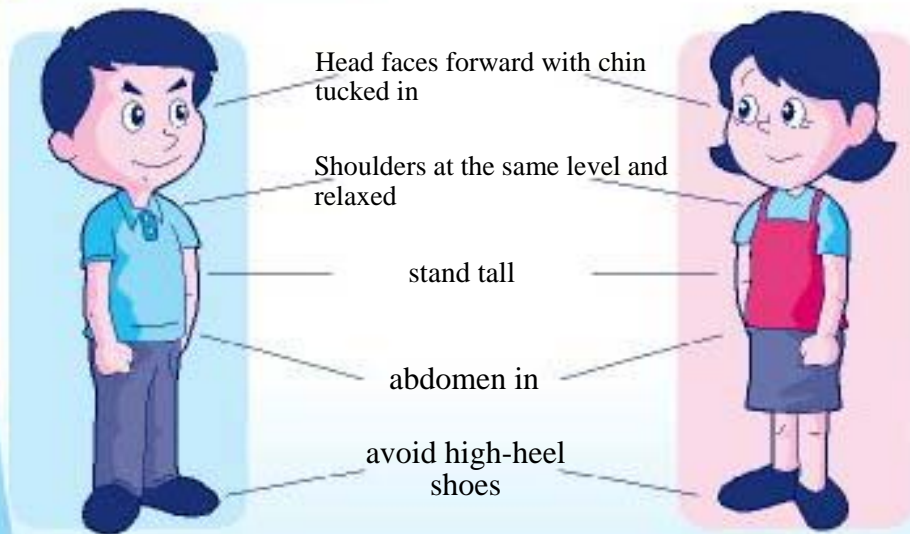
# GOOD POSTURE AND HEALTHY SPINE



Our spine, with its strong structure, is the main supporter of the body. The vertebrae of the spine, together with the ligaments, muscles and inter-vertebral discs stabilize the spine, allow the body to perform movements and adopt different postures. Children and adolescents are in important stages in bone development. Correct posture involving the spine at all times gives not only a smarter appearance but also helps to prevent injury and illness of the back.

## Maintain a correct posture

### 1. When standing or walking



avoid high-heel shoes or platform shoes

### 2. When sitting and resting



the neck and the back should be straight, both feet should rest on the floor



the desk and the chair should be of appropriate height, and close to each other

### 3. When carrying the school bag



use satchel with wide and soft padded straps, adjust strap length to suit body size



carry the bag on both shoulders and with the bag close to the back, the weight of the school bag should not exceed 10% of the body weight



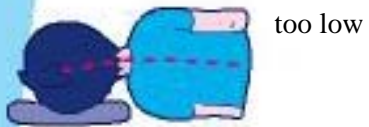
do not let the upper part swing away and the lower part press the waist

if carrying the bag on one shoulder or with one hand, switch side frequently



## 4. When sleeping

### Pillow



too low

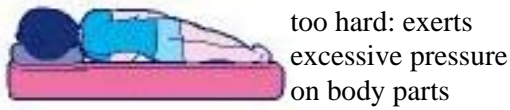


too high

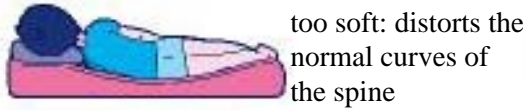


height of the pillow should approximate the width of the shoulder

### Mattress



too hard: exerts excessive pressure on body parts



too soft: distorts the normal curves of the spine



appropriate firmness: supports the body evenly

## 5. When getting up or lying down



### getting up from bed

do not strain the back

lie on the side, put the legs by the side and sit up with the help of the arms



### lying down on bed

do not strain the back

sit on the side, lie down on the side and turn to your back



## 6. When moving heavy objects



use pedestal



avoid stretching the arm excessively



bend knees and squat



do not bend the body



separate heavy objects into smaller portions and carry them with both hands



do not carry heavy objects all at one time



ask somebody to help if the object is too heavy



do not bend the body



bend the knees and squat, keep the back straight, move the body near to the object, use leg and shoulder muscles to lift the object

do not bend the body

# Improve the health of the spine

## Regular and appropriate exercises

Doing the right amount and right kind of exercise can:

- strengthen the back and abdominal muscles
- increase the density of bones
- improve the suppleness and endurance of the body
- prevent soreness and backache

### 1. Aerobic exercises

Do aerobic exercises for about 60 minutes at least 3 times a week

Jogging

Ball games

Rope jumping

Swimming



### Exercises for the back

- Practice the following daily, stay in position for 5 seconds, repeat 10 to 15 times,



- lie on your back, bend the knees slightly, stretch out the arms
- roll the legs sideways, turn the head to the side opposite to the legs



- sit on chair with good posture
- look over your shoulder and position your arms on back of chair as shown

Practice the following daily, stay in position for 5 seconds, repeat several times



- |                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| a. support the back with the hands | a. legs spread apart                      | a. stand up, both arms rest on their sides |
| b. lean backward                   | b. raise one arm, bend the waist sideways | b. push the shoulder backwards and inwards |

### 2. Balanced diet

Prevention of obesity is essential in protecting the spine from heavy loading.

A balanced diet is therefore vital and should consist of larger amounts of cereals, vegetables and fruits; moderate amounts of meat, egg and fish; and minimal amounts of fat, salt and sugar. It would also be beneficial to have calcium-rich foods, e.g. milk, cheese, yogurt, bean curd, sardine with bones.



# BAD POSTURE

## 1. Why do I get soreness and backache so easily?

If you stay in the same position or do certain movements repeatedly (e.g. computer work, electronic games), your muscles will be strained. Prolonged improper postures, inappropriate or over strenuous exercises and obesity will bring about stress and strain to the muscles, ligaments and inter-vertebral discs, resulting in soreness and backache.

## 2. Why do I have a rounded back ?

If you keep stooping when you stand or walk, or bend your body when you do homework, it is easy to form a rounded back. This round-shaped back not only affects the appearance, but also leads to tiredness of the shoulders. Moreover, chest expansion and health would be affected. However, a hunchback could be due to diseases. If there is any query, please consult your doctor.

## 3. How can I check my standing posture?

The “wall test”: When you stand in a normal, relaxed position with your back against the wall, a proper posture would leave only a small space (approximating the thickness of a hand) behind the neck and the back. If the space is too large or too small, the posture is incorrect.

