

Exercises to help with posture

Who: These exercises are especially helpful if you have had spinal fractures and are concerned about loss of height or change in body shape. For example you may have had many compression fractures in your spine and feel your trunk has shortened causing shortness of breath, a protruding tummy, indigestion or stress incontinence.

If you haven't had any fractures these exercises are good for you too.

Why: Practicing good posture and improving muscle strength and flexibility may help with some of the symptoms you're troubled by. You can't reverse the changes if fractures have altered the shape of your spinal bones but these exercises may make some difference. Maintaining good posture is important in promoting the health of your spine, reducing strain on joints, tendons and muscles, and helping with balance. In combination with good moving and lifting habits, these exercises may help to prevent problems in the future.

What you need: If you struggle with balance or would prefer to perform any of these exercises seated you'll need an armless chair.

When and how: Do these exercises on two or three days a week.

Slowly and smoothly move into the desired position, as far as possible without pain. Hold the movement for the recommended time, if comfortable. Don't forget to breathe! Repeat on the other side when you are ready.

1

Standing and sitting

- **When standing:** Stand tall with your feet hip width apart, your weight evenly distributed through your feet, your knees soft and your tailbone tucked under
- Pull your lower tummy muscles in to feel a slight inward curve in the base of your spine
- Lengthen your spine, keep your shoulders down and relaxed, look straight ahead and tuck your chin in a bit so that your ear lobe is in line with your shoulder
- **When sitting:** Sit with your hips, knees and ankles at roughly 90 degrees, with your feet flat on the floor
- Pull your lower tummy muscles in and lengthen your spine
- Keep your shoulders down and relaxed, look straight ahead and tuck your chin in a bit so that your ear lobe is in line with your shoulder



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Chin tuck

- In standing or sitting tuck your chin back towards your spine, taking care not to look up or down
- Hold for two seconds then relax
- Repeat as many times as you find comfortable





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3

Head tilt

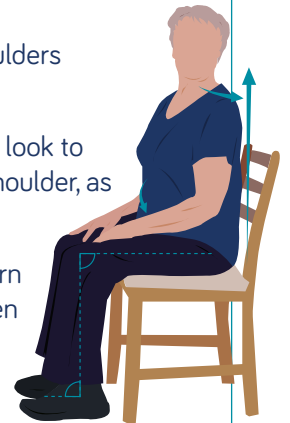
- In standing or sitting keep your shoulders down and relaxed. Looking forward, bend your right ear down to your right shoulder as far as comfortable, taking care not to lean your head forwards or backwards
- Hold for two seconds, return to the centre and repeat on the left side
- Repeat up to ten times on each side
- As you progress, aim to take the ear a little closer to the shoulder



4

Neck rotation

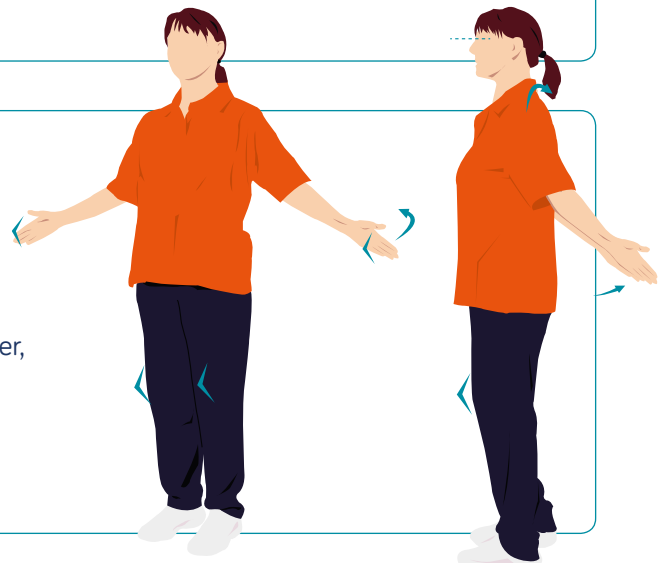
- Stand or sit with your shoulders down and relaxed
- Slowly turn your head and look to the right, over your right shoulder, as far as you can
- Hold for two seconds, return to the centre, relax and then repeat on the left side
- Repeat up to ten times on each side



5

Shoulders back

- In standing or sitting roll your arms out to your sides at shoulder height, with your palms facing forward
- Squeeze your arms back, pulling your shoulder blades together, taking care to keep your chin tucked in
- Hold for five seconds then relax
- Repeat up to ten times



Well done! As you get used to these exercises aim to expand the movement even further. To maximise changes in your posture, combine these exercises with targeted muscle strengthening exercises. Use our *Exercises to promote bone and muscle strength* fact sheet (3) theros.org.uk/exercise/Strength to help.

Try to practice good posture as part of your everyday routine by being aware of how you are standing and sitting; think 'straight and tall' – it'll soon become a habit. And be aware of the 'text neck', as we spend

more and more time looking down at our mobile phones! [See the accompanying video to these exercises at theros.org.uk/exercise/Posture](https://theros.org.uk/exercise/Posture)

Tip: Try sitting with a soft pillow on your head (when you are alone!). Balancing it for a moment gives you a clear reminder of what an upright spine feels like.

Try out some of our other similar fact sheets: *Exercise for back pain after spinal fractures* (5) theros.org.uk/exercise/BackPain, *Moving and lifting safely* (7) theros.org.uk/exercise/MovingAndLifting

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This fact sheet forms part of a range of nine fact sheets on exercise for osteoporosis and bone health. Further resources including general information about osteoporosis and bone health are available at theros.org.uk or call 01761 471771