

# Posture

## 'Sit up Straight' - Time to Re-evaluate!

### 1 There is NO 'correct' posture

Despite common posture beliefs, there is no strong evidence that one optimal posture exists or that avoiding 'incorrect' postures will prevent low back pain.



### 2 Differences in posture are a fact of life

There are natural variations in spinal curvatures and there is no single spinal curvature strongly associated with pain. Pain should not be attributed to relatively 'normal' variations.



### 3 Posture reflects beliefs and moods

Posture can offer insights into a person's emotions, thoughts and body image. Some postures are adopted as a protective strategy and may reflect concerns regarding body vulnerability. Understanding the reasons behind preferred postures can be helpful.

### 4 It is safe to adopt more comfortable postures

Comfortable postures vary between individuals. Exploring different postures, including those frequently avoided, and changing habitual postures may provide symptomatic relief.



### 5 The spine is robust and can be trusted

The spine is a robust, adaptable structure, capable of safely moving and loading in a variety of postures. Common warnings to protect the spine are not evidence-informed and can lead to fear.

### 6 Sitting is not dangerous

Sitting down for more than 30 mins in one position is NOT dangerous. However, moving and changing positions can be helpful, and being physically active is important for your health.



### 7 One size does not fit all

Postural and movement screening does not prevent pain in the workplace. Preferred lifting styles are influenced by the naturally varying spinal curvatures and advice to adopt a specific posture or to brace the core is not evidence based.

For further information please consult your health professional or visit our website:  
[www.southtees.nhs.uk/services/back-pain-triage-and-treat/](http://www.southtees.nhs.uk/services/back-pain-triage-and-treat/)

This infographic is a summary only. Please consult the full text for clarification and supporting references. Slater D, Korakakis V, O'Sullivan P, Nolan D and O'Sullivan K. 'Sit Up Straight': Time to Re-evaluate. J Orthop Sports Phys Ther 2019;49:562-564