

# Your posture matters

Let's take care of it together



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# What is posture?

Your posture is your position when you are lying, sitting, standing or moving over every 24 hour period.

If you lie, sit and stand well, and move your body often, you will be taking care of your posture. This can:



Help avoid **muscle and postural changes**.



Help avoid **acute or chronic pain**.



Help your **internal body systems** function as best as they can.

Your **posture** throughout the day and night will impact on the **shape** of your body.



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# Why posture matters

## 24 hours a day

Wee Tip: don't stay in the same position for too long.



Understanding the impact of posture to the shape of your body is very important whatever your age.



Everyday activity such as using your **mobile** phone, sitting at your **computer** or watching **TV** can create a posture that effects your body's natural alignment. This causes physical stress to the body which can cause pain, discomfort and even deformity of your spine.



It's particularly important to be aware of someone's posture if they **can't adjust their position** independently.

Changes in body shape can affect someone's **physical and mental wellbeing** including their ability to eat, drink and breath well.



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# Why your posture might change

Posture changes can make it difficult to manage without help and support.

Here are some reasons why your posture might change:

-  Adopting **poor habitual positions**.
-  Becoming **older**.
-  An injury, disease or condition which affects **the way your brain works**.
-  Born with a **health condition or disability**.

You or someone you care for could be at risk of developing unwanted postural changes. However, it's **never too late** to start doing something about it.

**Wee Tip:** why not look at your posture and positions over a day and night?



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# Reducing the risk of postural change

You can reduce the risk of unwanted postural changes if you aim for a variety of symmetrical and well supported positions throughout the day and night.



You want to be as **upright** as you can sitting, as **tall** as you can standing and as **stretched out** as you can lying down.

Wherever you are, make sure that you are **comfortable and supported.**



Did you know you spend **2,500 hours lying in bed** each year? This is a great time to lie well and be comfortable. You will benefit throughout the day from a better sleep.

Wee Tip: are there any positions you think you need to change?



# Fast facts



**4.7kg**

of gravity force  
**pushes down on you**  
24 hours a day



**600**

**muscles** are  
**inside your body**  
helping you move



**5**

is the number of  
**directions** your  
**spine moves in**



**S**

is the shape of  
**your spine**  
takes naturally

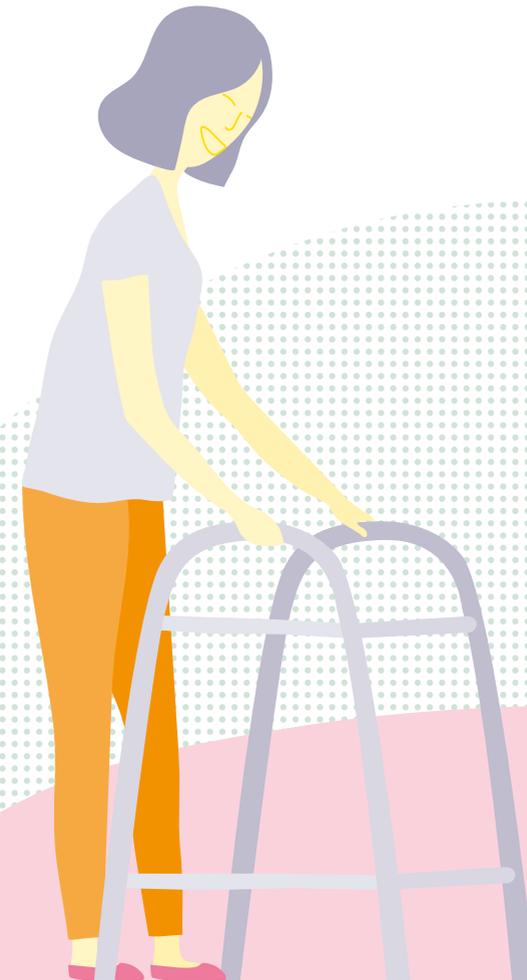


Good posture  
**holds up the**  
**whole weight**  
of your body



Posture **affects**  
**a lot more** than  
just the spine

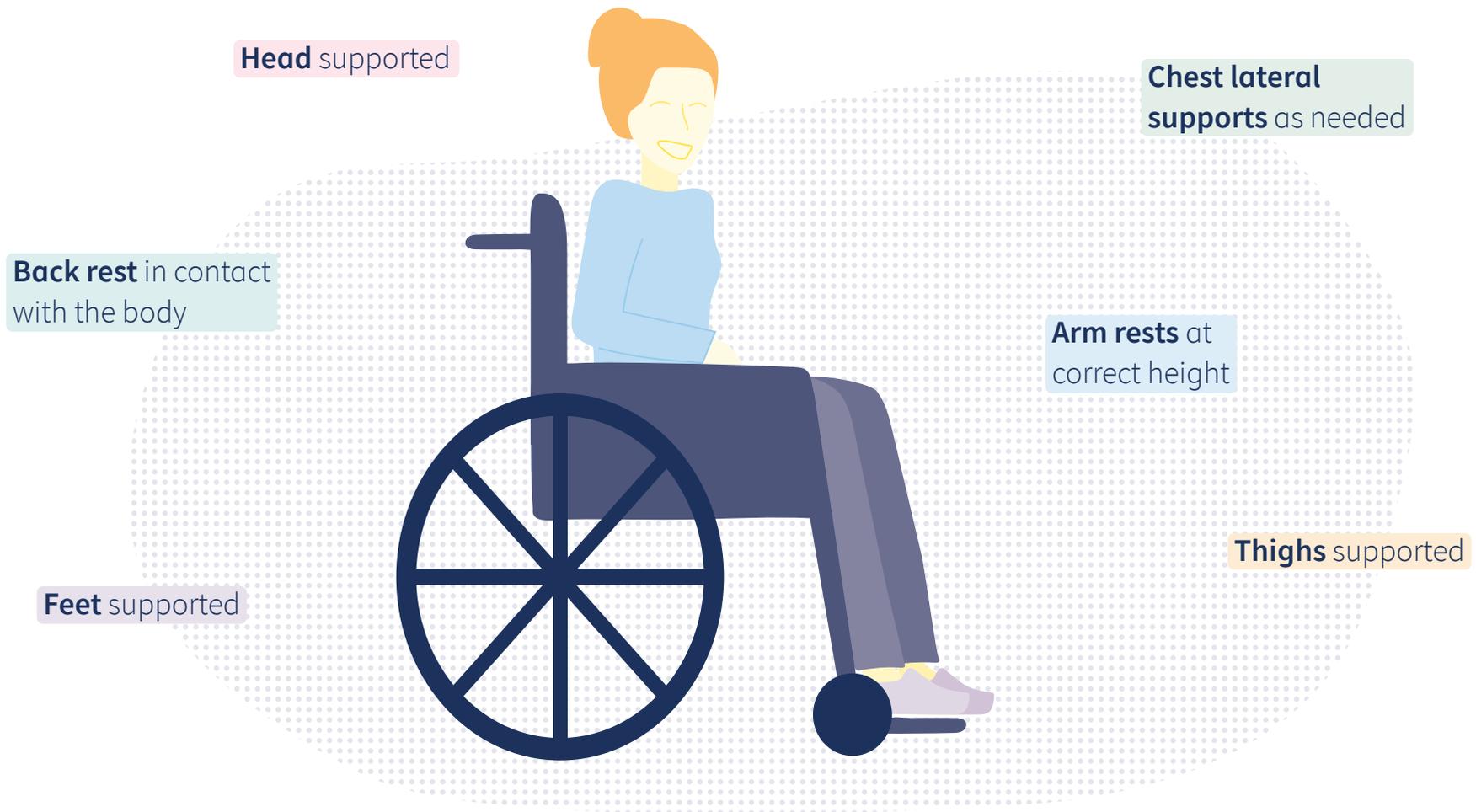
Remember: it's never too  
late to make a difference!



# Sitting

Size matters—aim for a well-fitting and supportive chair or wheelchair to help you participate in activities.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty with sitting upright, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.



# Lying

Rest and play matters—how you lie overnight affects your posture during the day.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty lying stretched out, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.



**Supportive surface** and **pillows** as needed

**Avoid positions** that leave you **stuck, sore or stiff**

**Use pads/cushions** to keep you stretched out, supported and comfortable

**Change your position** more often



# Standing

Stretching our muscles and loading our bones matters—stand as often as you can for as long as you can.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty standing up tall, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.



**Appropriate footwear and splints** can make a difference

Use your **equipment as advised** e.g. wall rails, walking aids, standing frames

**Be active** in standing



# Walking & moving

Moving about as much as you can matters—try not to sit still for extended periods. Weight bearing activities are good for improving strength, mobility and for maintaining strong bones.

**Wee tip:** if you are having difficulty walking, you can ask for a healthcare assessment.

**Use a walking aid** e.g. a stick. Ask someone to help you transfer into your walking aid if needed

**Wear splints** if you've been given them

**Wear supportive** and well fitted **footwear**



**Never walk in socks** or tights on hard floors in case you slip

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# Time to seek advice

It's important to know when to get in touch with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist who can help you take care of your posture.

Here are some examples of what you might need help and advice with:

- + You **lean to one side** when sitting or lying.
- + You feel your leg muscles are **stiff or tight**.
- + You need someone to help you **change your position**.
- + You get stuck in the **same position** when lying or sitting down.
- + You're always **uncomfortable, sore or stiff**.
- + Your level of independent **mobility is changing**.

**Remember:** your posture throughout the day and night will impact on the shape of your body.



This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email **[altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk)** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.



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