



## Offpeak Membership @ Westside Gym

Do you like working out when no one else is around? Getting the equipment you want, when you want it? Do you like saving money? Most importantly, do you typically work out between 9am and 5 pm? If this sounds like you, then you should consider signing up for our discounted "off-peak hours" membership.

Here at the Westside Gym you can watch your favorite daytime soap while putting yourself through grueling cardio paces or indulging your body in an uplifting work out. The "off-peak hours" membership includes the lunch hour, so if you are tired from sitting at your desk all day, come on over for a workout. Studies prove that people active during their lunch break have an increase in work productivity. Another plus to the "off-peak hours" membership is that it is available 7 days a week.

Join the spunky Westside Gym crew in our fabulous work out facility. Here at the Westside gym, we have a knowledgeable front desk team available at all times. The staff will be more than willing to help you with your work out, whether it be a new exercise to add a little variety or perhaps just a little guidance on proper technique; we will be here when you need us. We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Erin Allen, Westside Gym Team Member and Personal Trainer*

**Call now for the Offpeak Membership @ Westside Gym  
Train for \$29 per month, between 9am and 5pm, 7 days a week!**

### Massage & Posture *continued from inside*

Massage is one of the five main modalities (heat; massage; stretching; strengthening exercises; and supportive measures to treat ligaments, bones, and nerves) employed in the conventional treatment of poor posture. Thai and Deep Tissue/Sports Massage offered at Body & Soul also incorporate the use of passive stretching. Massage and stretching work on the muscles to relieve tightness and strain and any hard fixations keeping them shortened. Massage helps to retrain the body to what proper muscle balance feels like. Massage also assists with body awareness in general; the more the body experiences relaxation, free joint mobility, taller posture and deep, unrestricted breathing the more it will crave that harmony naturally. I often hear people say things like "Wow I didn't know my body could feel this loose, I actually feel taller!" Tall and free versus Quasimodo - you decide.



## Posture...The Picture of Health!

Happy New Year! The staff at Body & Soul hopes that 2008 brings success to everyone...and that all those fitness resolutions find their mark! Now is a great time to remind you that we're experts in helping folks establish realistic goals that they can follow through on. One of the greatest causes of failed 'get-fit resolutions' are unattainable goals.

This issue of The Fitness File focuses on **posture**. What is good posture? Most people think it means you have to "stand up straight", tensing your back to heave your chest 'in and up', and pulling your head back to your chest. This is not so. Read on to discover what you can do to help your posture, and what it can mean to your health.

### Proper Posture and Personal Training

"Sit straight", "stand straight", "pull your shoulders back" ... How many times did we hear words like this from our parents or teachers? Little did we know that improper posture affects over hundreds of muscles and a large number of joints. But what exactly is proper posture? What should it feel like, what should it look like and how to achieve it. Lots of questions ... Books, videos, trainers ... but where to start? Read on! *continued inside*

### Back By Popular Demand!!



**TAB Bra Fitting Clinic at Body & Soul**  
January 24 & 25

Call 224-BODY to book an appointment, or simply drop in between 7:30 am and 6:30 pm.

Partial proceeds from this event will benefit the Downtown Eastside Women's Association.



## Profile: Robin Hawkshaw



I have been working with personal trainers at Body & Soul for approximately five years and I really appreciate the positive and encouraging environment they provide. I like the social, family atmosphere that encourages me to try MY best while working with some of the best athletes and trainers around. I enjoy skiing, gardening and walking and I find the combination of training sessions, Pilates classes, massage therapies and Dr. Case's adjustments to be the prescription to keep me moving and motivated. It has become a real family affair for us. My husband uses the chiropractic services and my grown children love to tune up their workouts with a few sessions to help them revitalize their training programs. As a family we also enjoy joining the Body and Soul team for the Sun Run, Pacific Spirit Run, Haney-Harrison Relay Race and the Run for the Cure. The supportive atmosphere at Body and Soul makes going to the gym a pleasure.

## Massage & Posture

*Stephanie Lafazanov, a Kinesiologist, Holistic Practitioner and student of Medical Intuition provides Thai, Classic Swedish, Deep Tissue/Sports Massage and QiGong classes at Body & Soul Health and Fitness.*

If you are like me, you may find yourself looking in the mirror, at pictures of yourself or even worse at home videos, wondering, "why didn't anyone tell me my posture looks so bad? I look like a chicken." Poor posture can really make us look older than we are. What you may also be aware of are those tight, painful muscles in your upper back and neck, your shallow breathing and general feelings of tiredness, headaches and tight jaw, which are all symptoms of poor posture. What I am describing, from my own personal experience of course, is a common postural problem called thoracic kyphosis, a slouched or rounded back, like Quasimodo the Hunchback of Notre Dame, you get the picture.

Postural problems vary from person to person and they are caused by a variety of factors. The "Quasimodo syndrome" as mentioned above is a common problem for people who work sitting down at a computer for several hours a day. Often the head is positioned forward and down looking at a desk or computer screen. The pectoralis muscles in the chest experience a shortening and cause the rolled in shoulder look and the antagonist muscles in the upper back and neck are constantly being pulled and strained, resulting in muscle fatigue. Because of the forward roll our lower organs, lungs, heart and diaphragm are compressed resulting in shallow breathing and even poor digestion. Over time posture problems cause muscle pain and tightness, stiff and painful joints and there is also a risk of degenerative osteoarthritis.

*cont'd on back*

## Posture & Aging

Imagine a person who has 'bad' posture (occupational, shortsightedness, depression, imitation, injury). The head goes forward, the chest falls, the back rounds, and on down the body it goes.

How does this happen? All postures require muscle energy to sustain, even good posture, thus the necessity for muscle endurance and strength. The effort to keep poor posture results in excessive muscle fatigue. The body will always find 'a' way (not always the best way) to compensate to keep the fatigued muscle(s) from stretching and potentially ripping (worst case scenario). After minutes, days, and months of poor posture, the body will compensate by shortening or lengthening (depending on muscle position), tightening, developing trigger points and eventually 'marbling' the muscles, joints and connective tissue with scar tissue (fibrosis). Incidentally, this scar tissue reinforcement is the same mechanism used by the body to 'protect' an overused injury through work or sport. Often, this reduction in strength and mobility is labeled a bad knee, shoulder, hip or elbow or just bad posture (prior to any pain showing up). These adhesions in the muscles and joints may be teased apart and therefore "fixable" (as long as there is no serious underlying structural damage).

## Fitness Tip: Be A Penguin!

While you wait for a webpage to load, toast to pop, or the microwave to beep, place elbows at your side, and touch your shoulders with your hands. Keeping your hands on your shoulders, and your ears aligned, raise both elbows (count one, two)

By freeing up these areas with soft tissue and joint techniques, the muscles are more pliable and much easier to stretch and strengthen.

### Tips to help avoid aging/fibrosis from postural stress

- Change positions often. There is no one perfect posture! Change is the key.
- Alternate between sitting and standing.
- Take 'micro' breaks every 20-30 minutes to stretch and walk.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat more non-inflammatory fats (omega-3s), reduce sugars.

### Limit/Avoid:

- Long periods of driving (due to posture and vibration)
- Smoking
- Poor posture for extended durations.

*Dr. Aaron Case, BSc, DC focuses on soft-tissue treatments, gait analysis and rehab. His goal is to help correct postures, treat his patients' injuries and enhance their performance. Dr. Case also empowers injured patients with the knowledge to help themselves through advice about ergonomics, correct posture and sleeping positions, nutrition and rehabilitation exercise routines. With this knowledge his patients become less reliant on him and other therapists over time.*



and lower them back to your waist (count one, two). Do as many reps as your wait allows. You'll be surprised how much exercise fits into 30 seconds. *By Denise Foley, Prevention magazine*

## Posture & Personal Training *continued from cover*

Proper posture is the position in which you hold your body upright against gravity while standing, sitting or lying down. Good posture involves training your body to stand, walk, sit and lie in positions where the least strain is placed on supporting muscles and ligaments during movement or weight-bearing activities. Good posture and strong core muscles keep bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.

### Good Posture:

- decreases the excessive wearing of joints that could result in injury or arthritis;
- decreases the stress on the ligaments holding the joints of the spine together and prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions;
- prevents fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy;
- prevents strain or overuse problems, backache and muscular pain; and
- contributes to good appearance.

Proper posture requires good muscle flexibility, strong core muscles, balanced muscles and awareness of your own posture. So what does it all look like? When standing with correct posture, the head is upright, shoulder blades are back and chest is forward. Tuck your stomach in and align your feet under your hips. A simple way to try this is to stand in front of a wall with your heels, butt, upper back and the back of your head touching the wall. Does it feel unnatural, maybe even uncomfortable? However, in this position the bones are aligned and they support each other against gravity with the least muscle strain. If the head is tilted forward, the neck muscles are straining to hold it back. Hence the tight neck and upper back. It feels unnatural because of our

everyday posture, to which we got used to over time, was not correct. Things like obesity, pregnancy, weak and/or imbalanced muscles, high heels, decreased flexibility, and poor working environment all contribute to improper posture which in turn causes muscles soreness. Improper bone alignment may lead to bone damage and arthritis.

So, when we have back/neck pain, we realize that it is from bad posture, but what can we do? Visiting a health specialist such as a Registered Massage Therapist and/or a Chiropractor and/or a Personal Trainer are some options. Massage Therapists and Chiropractors can assess your posture, treat injuries and sore muscles, and in cooperation with Personal Trainers prescribe exercises to work on muscle strength and flexibility. It is important not to try to force your body to exhibit proper posture. Instead, try to develop awareness of your body's positioning and movements. Once you begin to develop such postural awareness, your Personal Trainer can identify those body areas that need strengthening and/or flexibility work.

If postural improvements are to be realized, your muscles will require regular flexibility and strength work. Active stretching can bring relaxation to shortened or tense muscles. Also, improved flexibility aids the realignment of connective tissue that might have been damaged by postural habits. Strength will enable you to hold yourself in proper position longer and more easily.

Now that you are aware of the negative potential of poor posture in regards to health and well-being, it is up to you to start adopting some of the simple hints described here.

*Csaba Maygar  
Body & Soul Personal Trainer*