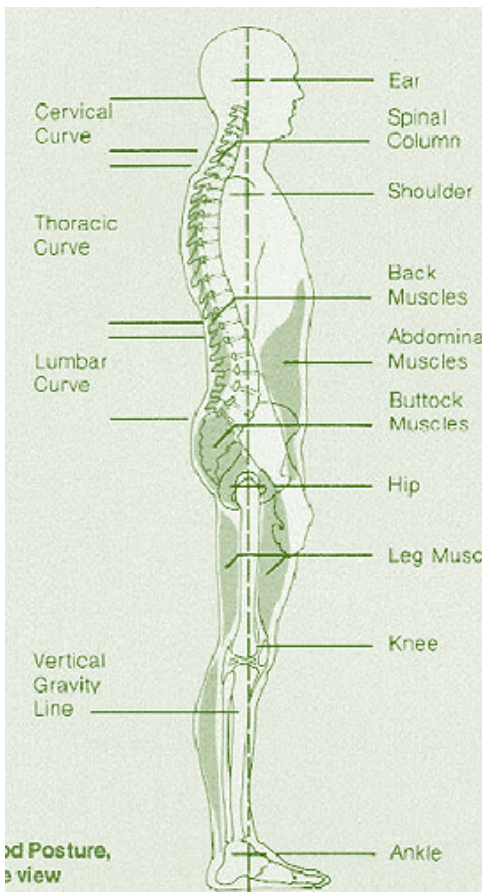


'Good' Posture: when your joints are aligned so there is no extra stress or un-needed muscle work

Why does having good posture matter?

When poor posture is maintained during prolonged periods of playing [whether continuous or intermittent practice] the following may occur:

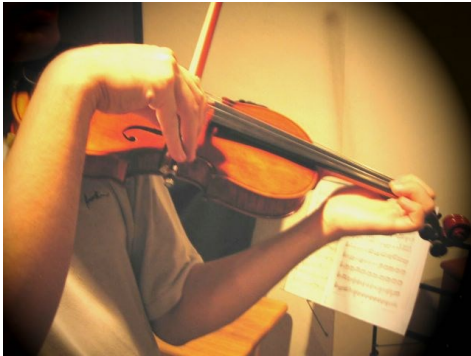
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Ineffective breathing
- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Overuse injuries such as muscle strains, inflammation, irritation



5 steps to finding 'good' posture:

1. Align your legs to be shoulder width apart, or comfortably apart with feet flat on the floor [when standing, do not lock your knees]
2. Pull in your stomach to contract your abdomen; this may decrease the curve in your low back slightly but do NOT tuck your hips under your body
3. Slightly lift your chest bone [sternum] so your shoulders fall backward
4. Balance your head on your neck keeping your head from protruding forward
5. Consciously check to make sure your weight is not shifted toward one direction. Your weight should be balanced between your right and left, front and back.

Can you have 'poor' posture of your arms, wrists and hands?



- ◆ YES
- ◆ No matter how you chose to hold your instrument, it is imperative that when you are playing that your shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers are not stretched to the ends of their range of motion.
- ◆ Stretching these joints to their end range of motion is the same as sitting or standing with poor posture.
- ◆ If you are having pain in these areas PLEASE talk with your professor and/or PT so that you can receive individualized care to help relieve your symptoms so that you can continue playing!

Quick facts to remember:

- ◆ When sitting or standing and leaning forward you are placing approximately 50% more stress on the discs of your low back than when standing with 'good' posture.
 - ◆ When practicing, balance your time sitting with standing, with standing being the preferred position
- ◆ Your posture should be relaxed and balanced with your weight evenly distributed between your right, left, front and back.
- ◆ Your body needs movement to prevent pain and stiffness while playing.
- ◆ Leaning against the back of your chair is good for a short break but it is better to sit forward on the seat to maintain 'good' posture
- ◆ Be sure to maintain your instrument to prevent malfunctions such as leaky valves, pads, or a bridge that is too high. These changes in an instrument lead to increased effort when playing, often causing a musician to contort their normally 'good' posture in order to compensate for the malfunction on their instrument.
 - ◆ Compensation and increased effort often lead to pain and injury over time.

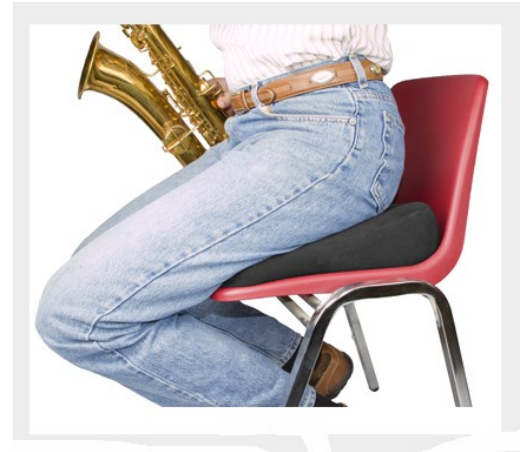


What is the 'ideal' posture for a musician?

- ◆ The back should be supported by a firm chair back
- ◆ Hips should be resting at a 145 degree angle
- ◆ Knees should be resting at a 90 degree angle
- ◆ Feet should be resting on the floor approximately hip width apart

Some examples of posture/ergonomic aids:

- ◆ Wedge seat cushions to maintain appropriate pelvic position and low back curvature
- ◆ Inflatable lumbar cushion to allow movement when sitting while maintaining low back support.



- ◆ Instrument harness to relieve weight from your fingers, hands and wrists.
- ◆ Stands for larger instruments to lessen the weight supported by your fingers, hands and wrists.

- ◆ Chin and shoulder rests for violins and violas to prevent excessive bending at the neck or hiking of the shoulder when playing.

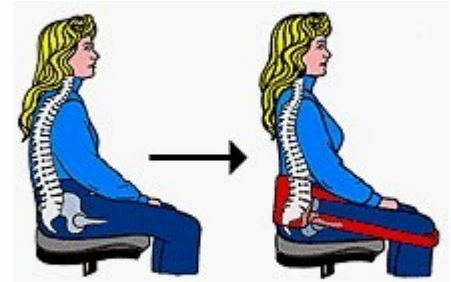


Posture/ergonomic aids continued:



- ◆ Music stand lamps to improve visibility of your music and avoid the need to lean forward while playing.

- ◆ Pelvic/back support straps [NADA chair]



- ◆ Finger and thumb splints [e.g. ring joint splints] and supports, to prevent your fingers from over extending while you are playing.



Ergonomic References:

EasyComforts Posture Corrector
Sold by: Miles Kimball Company
\$24.99

StabilityAce Upper Back Posture Corrector Brace and Clavicle Support for Fractures, Sprains, and Shoulders (Large)
Sold by: StabilityAce
\$24.99

BSN Medical Pro-lite Deluxe Clavicle Support (Large)
Sold by: Medical Solution
\$18.22

NADA chair available on Amazon

NOTE:

If you are experiencing any symptoms such as pain, abnormal muscle weakness, numbness, tingling, needles, etc. **DO NOT** start using a new posture/ergonomic aid without talking with your professor and/or a PT or MD **FIRST** as you could be doing more harm than good.