

JUNE 2018

## Century City Physical Therapy Newsletter

# FITTIMES

<http://www.centurycitypt.com>

(310) 553-2519



## POSTURE from a PHYSICAL THERAPY PERSPECTIVE

Before you read any further, check your posture. Are you slumping with your chin pushing forward or are you sitting up straight with shoulders relaxed, feet on the floor?

Your posture is shaped by many things: self-confidence, culture, individual mannerisms, and the movements and activities you spend your time doing.

Although the spine and pelvis are meant to function as flexible structures to adapt to a rich variety of possible movements, in reality, modern humans tend

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### GROUP CLASS OFFERINGS

Please call to reserve a spot for group classes  
(310-553-2519)

#### Pilates Mat Classes

Taught by Dr. Jamie Schoen, certified Pilates instructor and licensed Physical Therapist. Classes are based on the principles of Joseph Pilates: providing a combination of core strength, toning, and flexibility. Classes are mixed level and are designed to meet the needs of diverse students. Beginners are able to learn and review basic Pilates concepts, while more advanced students are challenged by exercises that progressively build on those basic principals. Please bring your own mat.

**Wednesdays 6-7pm**

#### Awareness Through Movement™ Classes

Taught by Dr. Stacy Barrows. Based on the principles of the Feldenkrais Method®, participants are guided through a series of slow, gentle movements which develop a heightened sense of their own physical restriction and become aware of new, more useful movement patterns. These classes will help you: Enhance exercise and performance skills! Improve flexibility and posture! Ease pain and promote relaxation!

**Tuesdays 12:30-1:30pm**

to get stuck in predictable patterns of muscle tightness and weakness because of our largely sedentary lifestyles and use of technological devices.

### To Slump or Not to Slump

Slumped posture is not bad in of itself; in fact you need it for many daily activities like putting on shoes and socks, or reaching for something in a low cabinet. But, it is important to move out of that slumped posture, returning easily to upright (but not rigid) positions so that your muscles don't weaken and lock your skeleton into limited movement patterns.

### Opposites Attract

Throughout your body muscles work in pairs to create movement by performing opposite actions. Think of pulling a door open—muscles in the upper back and back of the shoulder become active, verses pushing a door closed—muscles in the chest and front of the shoulder activate. To do each of these motions with ease, you need a balance of strength and flexibility. For

example, if the chest and front of the shoulder are very tight (from chronic slouching or regular chest workouts without stretching), not only will the tightness in those muscles make it harder to properly activate, the opposing muscles in the back will also have diminished function.

### Side Effects of Sitting

Every muscle has an optimal length meaning that the balance of strength and flexibility within that muscle allows it to be ready to contract for all of the activities throughout your day. Prolonged or excessive sitting often results in predictable patterns of tightness and weakness in both the upper and lower body.

- **Lower Body:** sitting causes tightness in the hamstrings (backs of the legs) and fronts of the hips, as well as weakening of the low abdominals and glutes from lack of movement

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## Posture Home Exercise Plan

Follow this exercise plan to address your body's adaptation to sitting

- These exercises can be done **1x/day** as a break from sitting
- **10-15 repetitions** of each exercise

### Exercise #1: Chest Opening

- Lay with the length of your spine supported by a foam roller, Smartroller™, or towel roll
- Start with arms by your sides, palms up
- Take 5-10 breaths letting your rib cage gently expand then melt into the floor
- Continuing to take slow breaths, glide arms along floor up to shoulder height as if you are making snow angles
- Glide arms down returning to start and repeat



### Exercise #2: Thoracic spine opening

- Lay on your side with knees bent in front of hips, head supported by a towel roll
- Begin with the top arm extended in front of you resting on the floor
- Imagine your body is a book with its cover closed
- As you inhale, open your top arm and torso towards the ceiling as if you are opening the cover of the book
- Rest in the open position for several seconds, focus on your ribcage relaxing and opening into rotation
- Close the book cover and repeat



- **Upper Body:** the shoulders are usually rounded forward with your head craning down and forward, causing shortening and tightening of the chest and weakness in the opposing upper back muscles
- **Neck:** muscles at the back of your neck overwork in an effort to keep your head up while the other supporting muscles become over-stretched and weak
- **Gaze:** where you focus your eyes in relation to the horizon significantly impacts posture by collapsing your head and shoulders downward as you look at computers and smartphones

**Where Do We Go from Here?**

- ✓ Try the exercises in the sidebar to address many of the areas mentioned above
- ✓ Take short breaks throughout a long day of sitting to bringing movement and blood flow to otherwise stagnant positions
- ✓ Several times a day increase your awareness of your sitting posture and naturally realign by performing 5-10 repetitions of lowering towards your chair to sit but then reversing the motion before you touch the seat
- ✓ Book a session at Century City Physical Therapy to get a personalized assessment and postural exercise plan!

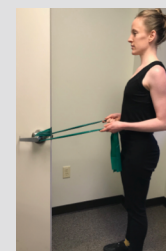
**Exercise #3: Bug on Its Back**

- Begin as shown with arms extended to the ceiling, hips and knees bent at 90° in tabletop position
- Ribcage and low back are relaxed with the low abdominals engaged
- As you exhale, slowly move one arm overhead as the opposite leg moves in the opposite direction to tap the toe to the ground
- Inhale to return limbs to the starting position
- Your abdominals will be challenged as your limbs move apart, try to keep your abdominals engaged



**Exercise #4: Upper Back Row**

- Loop a resistance band around a doorknob as shown
- While holding each end of the band, draw first the shoulder blades then the elbows back, as shown, to engage the upper back muscles, opening the chest
- Hold several seconds before slowly releasing, repeat



**Exercise #5: Hamstring Stretch**

- Stand next to a counter or stable furniture for balance support
- Put one foot on a chair or stool, flex your foot, toes toward your nose
- Stand tall with your hips facing forward towards your foot
- Instead of rounding your spine forward, imagine folding at your hips, sticking out your bottom until you feel a stretch in the back of your leg
- Hold 30-60 seconds each leg



*Century City Physical Therapy is owned and operated by licensed physical therapists Susan L Bass, PT, DPT and Stacy Barrows PT, DPT, GCFP, PMA®-CPT. Jamie Schoen PT, DPT is a certified Pilates instructor and is enthusiastic about helping people to be proactive in their own recoveries. Together, CCPT has over 50 years of clinical experience. We combine our varied backgrounds with evidence-based practice to provide up to date models of care to meet individualized needs.*

