

Parkinson's affects control of automatic activities. Posture changes may occur without the brains' automatic reminders "to stand up straight." These changes may include stooped/rounded shoulders, decreased low back curve, and/or forward lean of the head and/or the whole body. Muscle stiffness/rigidity can also contribute to changing posture. You may notice that your posture changes when your medications aren't working as well or when you have been in one position for too long. If you are concentrating on another activity (like walking or working at the computer), you may also notice a change in posture.

Why is it important to monitor your posture?

- Neck or back pain can occur when natural spinal curves are out of alignment.
- Stooped posture reduces your ability to take deep breaths, which can affect communication skills. Stooped posture also reduces eye contact.
- Loss of flexibility from changing posture can cause difficulty when raising arms overhead, rising from a chair, etc.

Do a "posture check"!

- Use a mirror to check posture (both front and side views).
- Press your body up against the wall with your heels 6" away.
- Tuck your chin, then slowly lift your head, and look straight ahead.
- Pull in your stomach muscles and bring your lower back closer to wall.
- Lift chest bringing your shoulders back and down.
- Walk away and try to maintain this position.
- Perform these exercises periodically throughout the day. (You can also lie down and press body flat into the floor if you prefer not to stand.)

Maintaining good posture:

- Be aware of posture changes. Try to catch yourself stooping or leaning and take action to make corrections. Ask someone to help remind you to catch yourself.
- Remember to change position often. Take "movement breaks"!
- Perform simple posture exercises/stretchers throughout the day.

Involving Your Team:

- Seek a physical therapy referral for specific posture recommendations and treatment
- Consider Yoga or Tai Chi classes
- Obtain a back (lumbar) or neck (cervical) rolls or cushions for better postural alignment needs.