

Bad Posture, the next killer

(Be aware of and correct poor posture for longevity)

Does sitting down shorten your lifespan? According to a study from American Cancer Society researchers the amount of time you spend sitting can affect your risk of death. The study that involved 123,216 individuals over a period from 1993 to 2006 concluded that public health messages should promote both being physically active and reducing time spent sitting.

One of the more alarming aspects of the study is that the people studied had no prior records of cancer, heart attack, stroke, or lung disease and were reported to be active (at least when not sitting) yet the study found that women who sat for more than six hours per day were 37 percent more likely to die than those who sat for less than three hours per day. Men who sat more than six hours per day were 18 percent more likely to die than those who sat less than 3 hours per day.

The study sites sitting for prolonged periods of time as having a negative influence on key metabolic factors like triglycerides, high density lipoprotein, cholesterol, and a number of other biomarkers of obesity and other chronic diseases as an explanation for the high death rates.

While I agree with, and am not surprised by, the findings of this study I am confident that the negative impact on our posture from sitting for many hours a day is also highly detrimental to our health and longevity.

Posture has become one of the most overlooked aspects of good health and longevity. Without good posture attaining and maintaining good health is impossible. Poor posture will eventually rob you of your ability to be active. Bad posture is at the root of poor technique regardless of the activity you perform. An inability to maintain correct posture will rob your body of its ability to move efficiently causing early fatigue that leads to technical faults and injury.

Another statement I am confident in making is that the physical activity that many people are participating in is largely ineffective or even detrimental to health and longevity. As an example the over use of exercises such as bicep curls, chest presses, and abdominal crunches to develop isolated parts of the body, often referred to as beach muscles, along with the usual lousy technique will make bad posture even worse. Good postural assessment and correction, body-weight exercises and then properly balanced resistance training would be more effective. Another example of the pitfalls practiced in fitness training is the over reliance on the resistance training machine. Many strength training facilities are filled with rows of these “fitness” machines that actually require the user to be either seated or lying down. Using machines such as these, in my experience, will diminish rather than promote good posture.

The results of this American Cancer Society study should help to shed light on the folly of these and many training approaches.