

Foot Deformities and Body Balance

Poor foot posture can cause balance issues because it can misalign your feet with the rest of your body. This can affect how your legs and knees distribute weight and pressure, which can impact your walking, knees, and hips. As your body tries to adapt and maintain balance, it may also cause compensatory movements in your ankles, hips, knees, and spine. Over time, these compensations can lead to muscle imbalances, joint pain, and poor posture.

Foot deformities can cause a number of risks, including:

- **Pain:** Foot deformities can cause pain in the feet, knees, hips, back, and head.
- **Difficulty walking:** Foot deformities can make it difficult to walk.
- **Skin breakdown:** Deformities can cause structural areas of high pressure, which can lead to tissue breakdown and skin ulceration. This is especially true if there is a lack of sensation in the area, such as with diabetic patients.
- **Infections:** Deformities can lead to nonhealing ulcers and infections.
- **Joint wear and tear:** Deformities can cause wear and tear on joints, which can lead to osteoarthritis.

Your feet can cause imbalance and posture problems as well. When your feet aren't properly aligned with the rest of your body, it's easy to see that this can throw your overall balance off as well. This makes you more prone to accidental slips and falls, which could result in further injury.

Although most people don't have perfect posture all the time, poor posture is often exaggerated for people with foot problems. When foot pain occurs, the body tries to redistribute its weight so it doesn't fall so heavily on painful parts of the feet. This results in poor posture that, over time, becomes habitual. Correcting these issues as soon as they are discovered is the best way to avoid foot problems spiraling into a whole body issue.

Foot deformities like flat feet and high arches can also cause poor posture:

- **Flat feet:** Also known as low arches, flat feet can cause the foot to roll inward and collapse against the ground, which puts stress on the foot, ankle, hips, and lower back. This can lead to poor posture, such as slouching or leaning forward.
- **High arches:** High arches can cause more pressure on the front of the foot, which can make the body tip backward to compensate. This can lead to lower back pain and poor posture.

Foot alignment and gait correction are necessary to maintain good posture and overall well-being.

You may not consider your feet to be an important part of your posture, but they are inseparably linked to the shape of your spine and the position of your body.

That's why paying attention to your feet while going about your day—whether you are sitting at work, walking to the grocery store, or standing in line—is crucial to your overall health. Your posture has an effect on the wellness of all your body's systems. By correcting your posture and your gait, you can change your health for the better.

Learn more about posture and your feet below!

HOW DO FEET AFFECT POSTURE?

Your feet are the foundation of your body. When you stand, sit, and walk, foot alignment matters as it affects the rest of your body.

Likewise, the posture of your spine, chest, neck, and hips affect your feet. Hunched-over shoulders and weak stabilizing muscles will create foot and ankle problems if left uncorrected.

Bad posture can potentially cause foot and ankle problems by placing stress on different parts of the feet and causing circulation issues. The feet and ankles may swell due to poor blood flow. The bones and ligaments will struggle to handle the shifting weight load, potentially causing pain and other issues.

Along with the musculoskeletal system, posture also affects your nervous system, digestive system, cardiovascular system, and respiratory system. From shortness of breath to incontinence, poor posture can wreak havoc on your body, which is why it is crucial to work toward good posture.

Understanding the connection between your feet and the rest of your body will allow you to take control over your posture.

WHAT CAUSES BAD POSTURE?

Bad posture can be caused by several factors:

- Stress can cause bad posture by encouraging the body to curl inwards.
- A working environment without ergonomic tools will contribute to bad posture
- Pregnancy may lead to bad posture due to stretching abdominal muscles and destabilizing the core.
- High heels change the position of the foot and may affect balance.
- Weak postural and stabilizing muscles, like the core and back, contribute to poor posture from lack of use, as well as inflexibility.

Clearly, posture is affected by many lifestyles and environments that are commonplace in modern-day society. That's why it is even more important to be aware of your posture and take action to correct it.

Conditions of the foot and foot structure may also cause poor posture:

- Flat feet, or low arches, encourage the foot to roll inwards towards the arch and collapse against the ground. This places stress on the foot, ankle, and, subsequently, the hips and lower back.
- High arches cause more pressure at the front of the foot, which causes the trunk of the body to tip backward and may lead to lower back pain.
- Foot problems such as heel spurs and shin splints can also contribute to poor posture.

While the shape of your foot may be hereditary, it could also be caused by lifestyle choices such as footwear. Thankfully, you can adjust your posture and avoid pain and other symptoms with the help of your podiatrist, mindfulness, and constant correction.

FIX POSTURE FROM THE FEET UP

For posture correction, it is important to consider every aspect of your body, from the position of your feet to the tilt of your head.

When sitting, keep both feet flat on the ground, or use a stool if your feet don't reach. Your knees should be at a 90-degree angle and they should rest right above the ankles. Your back and hips should be against the chair and shaped with lumbar support. The neck should also be supported and the shoulders should be relaxed with the blades pulled across and down the back. If you are using a computer, keep your forearms parallel to the floor and place the computer screen slightly above eye level to avoid tipping the head forward.

Your posture while standing should look like a straight line from the ankle to the hip to the shoulder. Slightly bend the knees to prevent cutting off circulation to the legs and hold the weight of your body mostly on the balls of your feet. Your feet should also be about shoulder-width apart. Engage your core to protect your back, lift your chest, and pull your shoulder blades back.

If you are working, it is important to shift between sitting and standing to protect your body (and your feet!) from unnecessary stress.

CORRECTING YOUR GAIT

Walking is also important to maintain proper posture. It is similar to standing, pulling in the core and holding the shoulders back, but the feet and ankles are more involved.

Gait abnormalities can cause strain on your body. Walking with a waddling gait, letting your feet scrape the ground, dragging your feet, or leaning forward or backward will place stress on your feet and ankles, as well as the rest of your body.

In order to correct gait abnormalities, it is recommended to visit a podiatrist so they can study your movements and give personalized suggestions for correction.

However, there are some exercises you can perform at home to help correct your gait:

- Wear orthotics to support your feet and distribute the weight of your body more evenly.
- Work on your balance. You can practice yoga or other postures to strengthen your feet and find stability.
- Stretch your feet, ankles, and calves to prevent them from getting tight.
- Focus on walking on the balls of your feet first as opposed to a heel-first gait. Walking heel-first causes the brunt of your weight to fall on the heel, further affecting your posture.
- Notice the alignment of your feet as you walk. If your toes point inwards or outwards as you walk, consider getting a night splint to help align your feet as you sleep.

YOUR POSTURE IS KEY TO YOUR OVERALL WELL-BEING.

By prioritizing good posture, you can enhance your health and wellness from the tendons in your feet to your breath. Practice the posture tips above and you will be on your way to optimal wellbeing. If you need help correcting your foot alignment and gait, visit talantonfootorthotics.com to change your posture and improve your life.