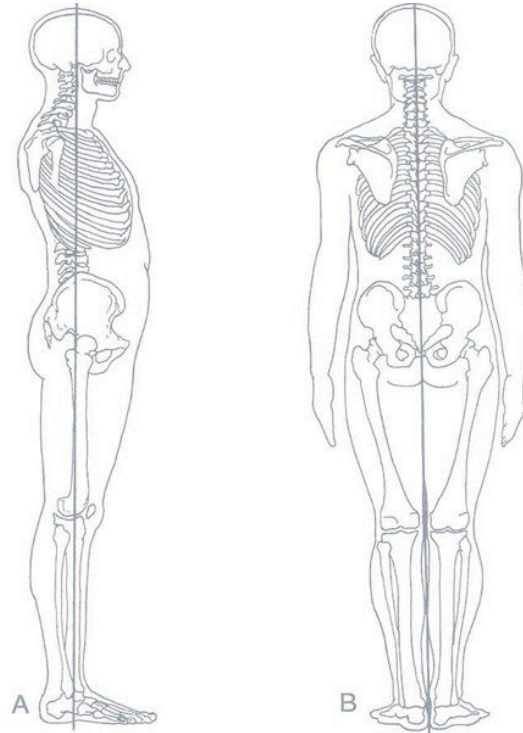


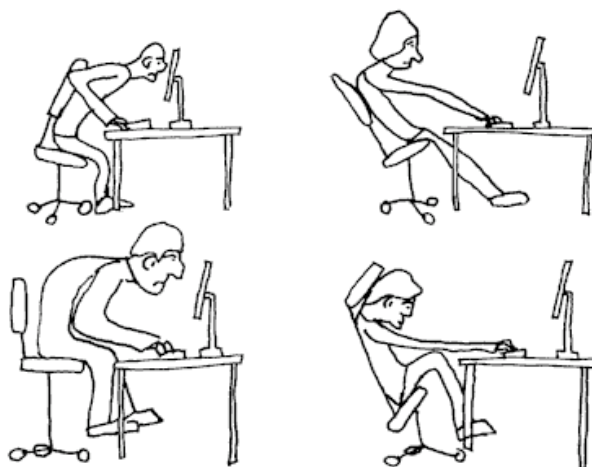
## POSTURE AND WHAT IT MEANS By Graham Blakeley

Ask the average person what posture means and they won't be able to tell you. The reason behind this is simple, it's because it is a vague word for many. We all have postures some considered good and some are considered bad but, for many, they simply don't care one way or another. From a therapist's point of view, it means something totally different and far more reaching than just holding yourself upright either sitting, walking or just standing. As therapists this is the model most used to describe a perfect posture.



This diagram granted has no flesh to him but look at some of the landmarks on the posterior view the line goes through. Firstly, the line is exactly even between the feet/heels and Secondly the line then passes between the ischium bones straight up the spine to the skull.

The side view is more remarkable as the line passes through the lateral malleolus, the knee, hip, shoulder and external auditory meatus and, out of the top on the skull. Any deviation of this model is considered out of alignment and postural muscles (if it is those that have pulled the body out of alignment) are in a state of static contraction, keeping the body in that position. Now take a look at these positions.



BAD POSTURE (EXAMPLES OF)

In all the cases there is a distortion of the myofascia and the problem with this is, that if the person that has this type of posture continues to sit as any one of those, then there is going to be at some stage PAIN!! So, where there is a shortening of the postural muscles on one side there will also be a corresponding lengthening and weakening of the muscles on the opposite side. The muscles that are most under stress are usually the stretched weakened muscles that require strengthening but here is the problem with some therapists. Some would say work in the gym and give advice to strengthen the weakened muscles when in actual fact what should be done is too lengthen the shortened muscles then, the weakened muscles simultaneously strengthen and are then able to do their job and not be dominated by a stronger muscle/muscles on the opposite side. The affect of a shortened muscle group/muscle is that the tissue interstitial fluid tends to turn to GEL but, what happens after tissue is returned to normal is the interstitial fluid reverts back to SOL. The rather complex system is then able to function normally.

The fact is, is that if they are a sportsman or woman or, a person who just goes out to work and has to accomplish certain tasks daily as part of their job it is much better to be able to do this, pain free. Often correcting a persons posture means starting at the feet and working up

So, it is important to have the patient as near as possible to the ideal posture as shown in the first picture and one shouldn't be too adamant as there are a vast number of reasons why they cannot and as therapists that means studying the subject diligently.

A vast amount of aches and pains can be treated purely by treating the postural muscles and applying a range of soft tissue strategies to accomplish this. One of the main treatment modalities I use is MET and people scoff at MET but in the past I have had amazing results. I was taught MET by Leon Chaitow DO at Westminster University and, still use his notes on my workshops. So, what a therapist needs is a sequential assessment of all the postural muscles starting at the lower leg and working up and treating them with the appropriate modality.

For a sportsman it is essential that they are as close to the ideal as possible to be able to perform at their best and for the non-athlete to be able to go out and earn a living. So, the postural model is vital to maintain a healthy state of balance and flexibility without putting the joints under too much stress. The therapist that understands and practices these techniques whether he or she is involved in sports or generally treating the public as a part of an holistic program, in my mind no one can be made better without the posture being treated (if it is the posture that is at fault) once the posture is treated a whole host of aches and pains tend to disappear then the vital part is to ensure that the patient is given things to do at home for themselves as a maintenance.

*Graham Blakeley has been involved for 15 years as a physical training instructor in the forces - 5 of which he was coaching the National Biathlon squad (cross country skiing and shooting) and qualified soon after leaving the forces in 1982. Since then he has worked as a therapist in various settings particularly football. Graham currently has two clinics one in Cambridge and one in Huntingdon where he works with Paramedics and a doctor treating anything from sports injuries to ergonomic based conditions.*

*Graham comments: "From a bodyworker's point of view, I know that times are moving fast and techniques are changing but, some are fundamental to your profession and that is the postural aspect of bodywork. So I think it is nice to share knowledge with others who have to depend on their skill level in order to make people's lives more comfortable."*

*Graham will be presenting his 'Postural Assessment & Correction' workshop in Belfast in 2010 and in Edinburgh, London and Dublin in 2011. This workshop is suitable for all bodyworkers and those whose profession is to have hands on their clients in order to treat. Visit his website at [www.feelreallygreat.co.uk](http://www.feelreallygreat.co.uk)*

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### ***Testimonial from SMTO member who attended in May 2010***

*“just to say that I attended the Graham Blakeley workshop this weekend which was fantastic, he is a really gifted Lecturer and I came away with so much and wanting more!!!”*

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**Cost: £200 [£10 Discount for SMTO Members]**

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