



Is Improving One's Posture a Simple Case of "Mind Over Matter?"

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Q: I try and try to improve my posture by mentally reminding myself to stand up straight, or hold my shoulders back, but it just don't seem to be making any difference. How can I make a lasting change in my posture?

A: Believing that you can effectively change your posture without massage is like believing that you can effectively change your weight without diet & exercise.

While it may seem as though improving one's posture is a simple case of "mind over matter," lasting postural improvement requires physical changes to the "structural engineering" of our musculature.

Repeating a mantra, such as "stand up straight," or "shoulders back," may work for a few minutes, but until your muscles are "retrained" (lengthened, strengthened, etc.) through massage, they will pull your body back into that dysfunctional posture as soon as that mantra has left your mind.

When it comes to posture, what's going on in your body will trump what's going on in your mind every time. It's just not a fair fight.

It's a little bit like "sucking in your tummy" versus actually losing weight. The former is a "quick fix" that won't last, but makes you feel as though you're addressing the problem; the latter actually addresses the issue at hand, and provides a lasting solution to the problem.

Similarly, making a conscientious effort to stand up straight or hold your shoulders back may make you feel as though you're doing something constructive about your posture, but the underlying root of the problem (musculature that is hypertonic or flaccid, and / or muscles that are riddled with trigger points) must be addressed in order to make a lasting change.

And that is exactly how we employ clinical massage therapy. We release & relax the muscles that need to be lengthened, thereby allowing other muscles that are too stretched out (and perhaps, as a result, flaccid) to revert to their normal resting length.

Just think of us as one part Massage Therapists, one part Structural Engineers!

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