

# Posture is an Indicator of Muscular Aches and Pains..

By David Hall, Qualified Massage Therapist

One of the things I often find myself doing unconsciously in a crowd is what I term "posture spotting."

In a more formal massage clinic situation it is known as postural and structural analysis.

Sometimes I'm waiting in a line, perhaps for a ticket at the cinema, and I notice someone standing relaxed nearby has one shoulder lower than the other.

Or it could be that one side of his/her shorts is riding higher than the other - often indicating the hips are unbalanced.

Maybe the person's shoulder blades stand right out (known as winged shoulder blade or winged scapula).

Or it may be they have very rounded shoulders, or they stand with one foot turned more out to the side than the other foot.

## Contributing Factors.

Whatever the postural signs exhibited by the unwitting "patient," it's usually quite easy to immediately pick what is likely to be causing or contributing to that postural fault and what problems it is likely to cause in terms of muscular or joint aches and pains.

People are often unaware they have these sometimes minor, sometimes major postural faults. So they never stop to think these could be responsible for or indicators of problems like headaches, or sore backs, shoulders, neck, legs, etc.

As a remedial massage therapist, I'm often tempted to approach a person I've been "posture spotting," give them my card and suggest they book in for a massage.

But, of course, I know what their reaction to a complete stranger making such an approach would likely be, so I leave them alone. (Unfortunately, with some of the laws now in place, that would be considered harassment!)

I've even toyed with the idea of sending an email to the host of a very well known national television show, suggesting she gets a massage. When she stands relaxed addressing the audience, one of her shoulders is noticeably lower than the other.



I could include in the email a list of the possible muscular aches and pains she would likely regularly experience and she would probably be amazed at how accurate the list would be.

Have you stood totally relaxed and looked - really looked - at yourself in front of a full length mirror lately?

Have you noticed any of the postural faults I've mentioned above?

## Self Examination.

Or have you ever wondered why one side of your neck sometimes gets really tight. Perhaps it's harder or sorer to turn your head to the right. Stand relaxed and check in the mirror to see if your left shoulder is raised.

Instead of just thinking you slept badly the night before, it might be that the sore neck is only a symptom of a more extensive muscular imbalance that has been building for some time.

Ever felt the outer thigh get really tight or sore on, say, the left leg (sportsmen might know the muscle as the ITB or iliotibial band)?

Perhaps combined with that the inner thigh (adductor muscles) on the other leg is tight or sore? Stand relaxed with your arms loosely down by your side and check to see if your right hip is higher than the left. (If in this instance your right shoulder is also lower than the left, you probably have at least a mild scoliosis - curvature of the spine).

A person's posture gives a remedial massage therapist dozens of clues about likely causes of a huge range of muscular and joint aches and pains.

Qualified therapists are trained to recognise what muscles are likely to be involved in postural

imbalances, how to check the muscles for flexibility and strength, and how to loosen or strengthen them if there is a problem.

Of course, postural problems may be due to an injury, birth or growth defect or other factors. But in the vast majority of cases it is simply due to an imbalance in the muscles between left and right side of the body, or front and back.

As well as remedial massage, a therapist will often give stretching or recommend exercises to help correct the problem.

**Problem Fixed.**

I've had experience with patients who have put up with muscular problems for a long time, sometimes years, after giving up on other forms of treatment. When they finally decided to try a massage, one or two sessions fixed their problem.

If you regularly suffer muscular aches and pains, don't put up with them or automatically pop a pill to try to relieve them.

Make an appointment with one of our qualified and experienced remedial massage therapists.

