

3. Is “poor posture” the common cause of back pain?

María, 32, works as an architect. She spends most of her day in front of her computer, carefully drawing building plans. For months she had been waking up with stiffness in her lower back. Her first thought was, *“It must be my posture”*.

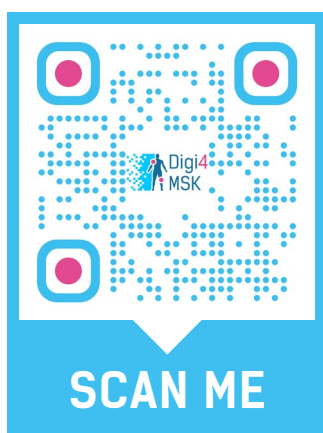
She started to pay attention to every position she took—how she sat, how she bent, even how she slept. Each time she felt a twinge, she straightened her back instantly, afraid of ruining her spine. She bought an expensive chair, used a lumbar cushion, and downloaded an app that reminded her to sit upright every twenty minutes. Still, the pain came and went.

At work, her colleagues joked that she looked like a statue. Even at home, watching television, she did not dare slouch. When the discomfort spread to her shoulders, she grew frustrated. *“I’m doing everything right”* she said, *“but my back still hurts”*.

One afternoon, a friend mentioned that she had back pain too—despite being very active and having perfect posture. That confused María even more. If posture was to blame, why did so many people with different habits have the same problem?

Later, her physiotherapist smiled and asked gently, *“Do you think there’s only one correct way to sit?”* The question stayed in María’s mind as she left the clinic, sitting a little more naturally than before.

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Skills you can build by watching the video:

- Understanding that there is not one “perfect” posture for a healthy back.
- Recognizing that pain can come from many factors—movement, tension, fatigue—not just posture.
- Learning how to vary positions and listen to the body’s signals without fear.

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/qO7nCePyKZM>

3.1. Is poor posture really the problem?

Many people try to maintain what they think is 'good posture' all the time to avoid back pain.

However, science suggests that the problem is not related to posture, but rather the amount of time we spend in the same posture.

We know from research that there is no ideal posture that fits everyone. Rather, some people can sit anyway they like, while others find that moving or changing positions is the best way to avoid pain. But...Do you know how you can manage your pain?

3.2. What are the factors besides posture?

Here are some ideas on how to manage back pain:

1. **Go for a walk or several walks every day.** A sedentary lifestyle—for example, sitting a whole day—is unhealthy and walking at a moderate pace can not only reduce back pain. It can make your back pain be gone for longer.

If your work can be characterized as "office work" you may benefit from doing strength training. It can be as little as a five-minute program, which you can do near your desk, or it can be fitness or strength training in a gym.

2. **Understand your pain.** If you know what makes it worse and how to make it less or even go away, then you are in control of your pain. This is an important step in your self-management.

Techniques such as being distracted from work, an audiobook or being around friends can be very helpful. Also, heat from a heat pack, or a shower, normally reduces pain.

Remember that most techniques and treatments only work for a short period of time, but once you learn to use them, you can repeat them again and again whenever you want or need to.

3. **Take a break.** If your work includes static, repetitive or awkward positions, you may find that small breaks can be very helpful. Breaks of as little as five minutes help some people.

Instead of trying to maintain a 'perfect upright posture', try and focus on learning techniques to control your pain. Each person has their own way, and it may include changing posture frequently, finding a relaxed way to sit or stand, go for a walk, do strength training or take short breaks during the day.



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Takeaway messages:

There is no right or wrong posture but staying in the same position for a long time can become uncomfortable. Poor posture is not the main cause of back pain, nor is good posture the solution, as there is no 'right posture'.

It is important to move and learn how to control your pain. For example, by stretching or interrupting the static sitting position a little more. By understanding what really affects your pain and having the tools to manage it, you can take steps to improve your well-being and feel more in control of your body.