

## Spinal Hygiene Exercises

Incorporate Spinal Hygiene exercises into your daily routine.

**The Spinal Hygiene™ exercises are aimed at countering the effects of too much sitting, poor posture, and not enough movement. They assist in healing and preventing spinal degeneration. They are designed to restore and maintain range of motion, muscular strength and stamina, joint lubrication and nutrition, and proper posture. When these aspects of spinal health are restored, healthy spinal neurology (communication and coordination) can also be restored and maintained.**

"Posture affects and moderates all human functions, both consciously and unconsciously, from breathing to hormone production, to thinking."<sup>1</sup> Research commissioned by the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) showed that a third (1/3) of people spend over 10 hours sitting down every day. Children's developing musculoskeletal structures are especially vulnerable to damage caused by sitting and poor posture.<sup>2</sup> Having an exaggerated curve in your mid-back is associated with a higher risk of death.<sup>3</sup> Clearly our ancestors did NOT do spinal hygiene exercises or get regular postural care. However, they were moving every day and NEVER sat at a desk or in front of television or video games. This is no longer possible in Industrial Society. We now require regular postural care and daily spinal hygiene exercises.<sup>4</sup>

1. Lennon et al. Postural and respiratory modulation of autonomic function, pain, and health. Am J Pain Manage 1994 (4) 36-39. 2. Oates, S. Lennon et al. Elementary school children at risk. Computers in Schools. 1998 14(3/4):55-63. 3. Kado et al., Hyperkyphotic Posture Predicts Mortality in Older Community-Dwelling Men and Women: A Prospective Study Journal of the American Geriatrics Society 2004 52 (10) 1662. 4. Chestnut JL. Innate Physical Fitness and Spinal Hygiene. The Wellness Practice – Global Self Health Corp., Victoria, BC. 2005.

### DOORWAY STRETCH

Stand in doorway with shoulders and elbows at right angles. Forearms resting on frame. Keep head pulled back and chin slightly tucked.

Walk or lean through doorway allowing body to fall forward, stretching the chest, and shoulders.

Relax. Breathe slowly while stretching. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

See picture below.

### ANTERIOR HEAD CARRIAGE(AHC) / FORWARD HEAD POSTURE EXERCISE



Place heels, buttock, upper back, and head against wall. Bring arms up with right angles at shoulder and elbow and externally rotate attempting to bring forearms and back of hand against the wall.

If unable to bring arms up, Start with them by your sides.

Tuck chin slightly to create flexion in upper cervical spine.

Relax and inhale, exhale slowly while pressing back of head and arms against wall.

Progress slowly in terms of number of repetitions and force applied until you can perform 10 repetitions of 5 seconds.

## **POSTURAL SCAPULAR-THORACIC EXERCISES – Y W T L**

For all of these exercises the object is to pull the shoulder blades together as much as possible and hold for 15 seconds. Inhale while relaxing, exhale while contracting and holding. **KEEP THUMBS POINTED BACK TO PROTECT SHOULDERS.** Best done standing.

**Y - Youthful**



**W - Wise**



**T - Terrific**



**L - Loving**



## DAILY SPINAL RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES (R.O.M. EXERCISES)

### YES - NO – I DON'T KNOW 's

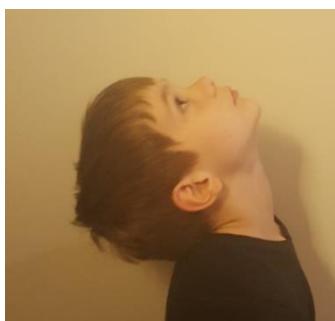
Each of these exercises will be performed for both sides of the body. For each exercise move to maximum range of motion and hold for a minimum of 15 seconds. Make sure you continue breathing with a relaxed face while stretching.



**YES**

#### **Neck Flexion**

Flex head as far forward as possible and hold for 15 seconds



#### **Neck Extension**

Extend head back as far as possible and hold for 15 seconds. Try to point chin towards ceiling.

Discontinue and tell doctor if dizziness occurs.



**NO**

#### **Neck Rotation**

Rotate head to one side as far as possible and hold for 15 seconds.

Repeat on other side.



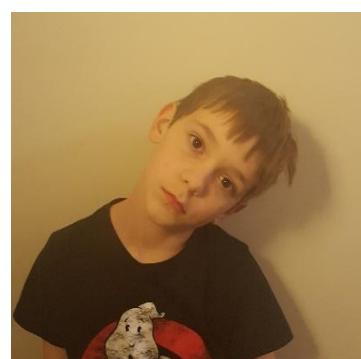
**I DON'T KNOW**

#### **Neck Lateral Flexion**

Pull left arm down and across back while laterally flexing head to right.

Hold for 15 seconds.

Repeat on opposite side



## Lower Body



### Spinal Flexion

With knees straight, slowly bend forward and flex spine as much as possible  
Hold for 15 seconds.



### Spinal Backward Extension

With knees straight slowly extend backward as much as possible and hold for 15 seconds.

Discontinue and inform doctor if dizziness occurs.



### Spinal Rotation

With hands together and out front slowly rotate backward as much as possible and hold for 15 seconds.

Repeat on other side.



### Spinal Lateral Flexion

With knees straight, slowly bend sideways and flex spine as much as possible and hold for 15 seconds.

Repeat on opposite side.

Videos of these can be found on our website  
<https://www.fetterchiropractic.com/move-well>

