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Good Posture Makes Good Sense

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WHEN a college woman becomes disconcerted over her profile view in a full length mirror, or when she ends each day with an ache in her back, it's time she took a thorough survey of herself and jotted down a few things about posture. She may brush her hair every night and try new complexion cares, but she misses an important element of grooming if she never seriously considers her posture.

Dr. Germaine G. Guiot, head of Iowa State's Physical Education Department for Women, strongly believes that good posture can improve many physical defects. Sometimes, however, the situation is reversed and physical defects are the cause of poor posture. A girl with poor eyesight may thrust her head far forward and to prevent plunging headlong downstairs, she rounds her shoulders and sags at the knees. Many tall girls, considering their height something to be ashamed of and hidden rather than accented, pull their chins down to their chests and crouch through their college years.

One-third of the men called are unfit for military service, and Dr. Guiot believes that women are equally as unfit. This truth was demonstrated in the high percentage of women rejected by the Women's Army Corps for physical defects. However, improvement of many of these defects is possible through an improvement in posture, Dr. Guiot believes.

The college woman should be particularly interested in the relationship of posture to her appearance and clothes. She realizes the importance of posture in improving her figure and she knows how much better her clothes fit and look if she gives them a straight pair of shoulders to hang from and a flat back, stomach and hips.

In opening an oven door, too many students in a foods laboratory bend at the waist and hips with an exaggerated sprawl as they lower themselves just far enough to peer in. It would be much better to lower the body by the knees and hips, keeping the stomach flat and back straight. In this way the student is in a position to lift the pan easily without straining any one set of muscles.

Round shoulders and a pigeon-toed sprawl do nothing for appearance. Exercises can be done during the day while doing routine work.

1. When making up the top deck bunk in the morning, plenty of time should be given to it. The back and stomach must be kept flat and the arm muscles stretched until a strong pull is felt.

2. In dusting, it is best to get down to the level of the lower chair rungs rather than jack-knifing at the waist. This is the time for plenty of squat, but no stoop. The head should be held erect and the shoulders kept back and loose.

3. Steering the sweeper down the hall doesn't call for any stevedore-pumping action with the shoulders and back. By just walking with it and bending the knees in order to push the sweeper under an object no posture faults can develop.

4. To correct that sitter's slump that inevitably develops after long hours in classes, every student should try digging the spine at the waistline into the back of the chair. The abdomen should be pulled in as far as possible, the thumbs placed on the bottom ribs, the fingers on hipbones and the ribs lifted up. After keeping the chest elevated to the count of fifty, try to keep it that way for the rest of the day.

Some of the best exercises can be done in the privacy of the college woman's room.

1. Lie flat on the back with hips near the wall. Swing legs up and start "walking" up the wall until the body is resting on the shoulders. Blow all the air out of the lungs and jerk the ribs up high toward the chin. Keeping stomach muscles tight and firm, slide down the wall until the back is on the floor. This one is good for that too-general slump through the middle.

2. Straighten up those shoulders and to keep the chin back where it belongs, try lifting shoulders up to the ears until it hurts. Keeping shoulders high, pinch shoulder blades back together till they hurt too. Still keeping the shoulders pinching, as hard as possible, slowly pull them back and down as far as they will go toward the waist. This exercise is good for over-worked shoulder muscles.