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Ishta Spinal Touch® Posture – A Key to Efficient Physiology

by Sue Weller and Allyn Edwards

We all know what poor posture looks like and the deleterious effects it can have; but how many of us are able to quantify poor posture, help the person's body to correct the postural changes and measure their progress? Well over the years we have been doing just that with Ishta Spinal Touch and have taught numerous other practitioners to do the same.

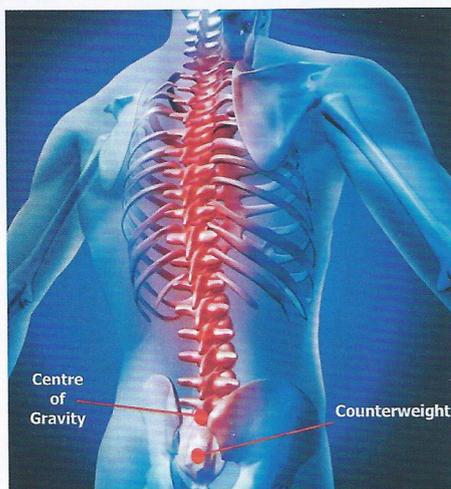
The Physiologically Efficient Posture

You may have seen this term used on the charts in your treatment rooms and not paid much attention to it. Look again and you will see the most energy efficient standing posture. The chart shows a posterior view of a plumb line passing through the middle of the spine. In the lateral view the plumb line passes through the middle of the ear, shoulder, greater trochanter, knee and ankle.

A Balanced Posture

When the centre of gravity, which is slightly anterior to L5/S1 joint, and the counterweight, which is anterior to S3, are correctly aligned, the person experiences a state of balance and poise and uses the minimal amount of energy to remain upright within the Earth's gravitational field.

All of the postural muscles exert a direct or indirect mechanical force on the spine and therefore the centre of gravity. This force must be balanced and countered by appropriate contractions from each and every other muscle in the body in order for the posture to remain upright and efficient.



As long as these forces remain within the elastic limits of the tissue then the body is self-correcting, given enough rest. However, due to the constant stressors of modern life, very few of us get enough rest for this to happen. This results in the body going beyond its elastic limits which leads to chronic changes

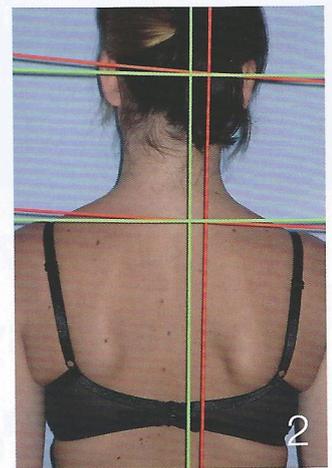
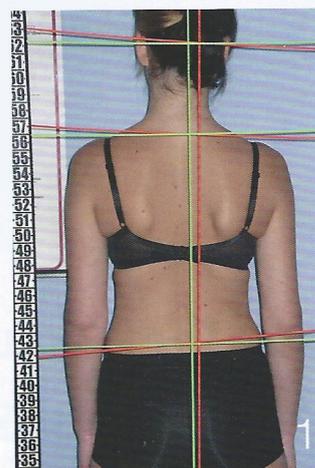
in the postural muscles (we see this as poor posture) which the body cannot resolve without outside help.

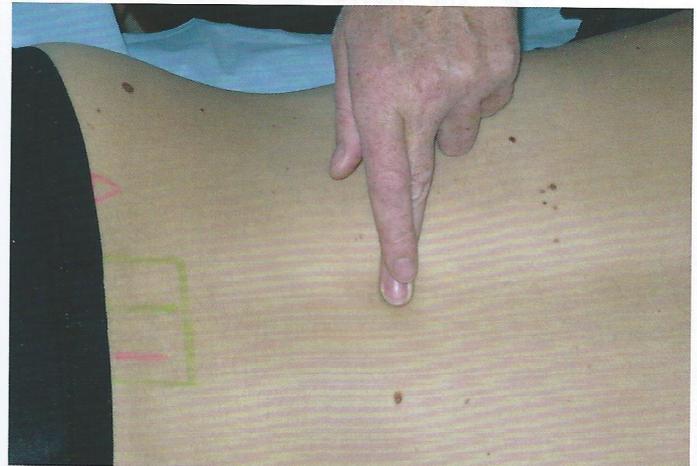
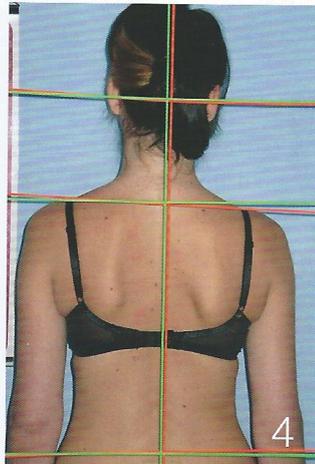
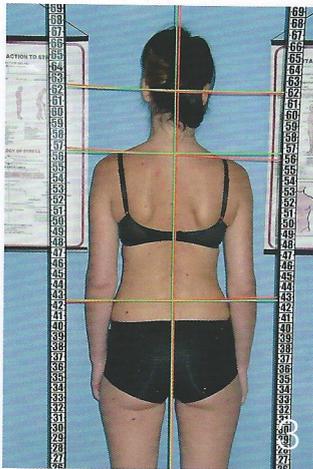
Presenting Postures

What we commonly see in our clinics are postures far from the physiologically efficient posture; chronically contracted postural muscles, misalignments within the joints, especially of the spine, and a posture that is out of true.

This can happen at any stage in life and below are some photographs of a 25 year old woman who was experiencing recurring, and at times debilitating, shoulder and mid-back pain and restrictions around the right shoulder.

From our plumb line assessments here, the green lines show the ideal posture and the red the actual posture. In figure 1 we can see that she is leaning to the left so that the plumb line lies to the right of the centre of gravity resulting in more weight going through the left leg; imbalances in the height of the ilia, shoulders and base of the occiput i.e. her right





ilium is higher yet her left shoulder and left occiput are higher. This is indicative of a lateral curve in the spine, which on closer inspection can be seen from T10 through to L2. In figure 2 we can clearly see that the left scapula is superior and that there are muscle tensions in the erector spinae of this area.

Following an Ishta Spinal Touch alignment there were clear positive changes to be seen, even after just one session. In figure 3 the most dramatic change is the correction in weight distribution, with the plumb line almost coming straight up through L5/S1. The ilia, shoulders and the base of the occiput are more evenly balanced. In figure 4 we can see more clearly the lining up of the thoracic vertebrae, with the release of inflammation and improvement in the circulation of the area, indicated by the red areas around the left scapula.

While there have been some positive changes in the posture which will allow the musculoskeletal structure to begin a process of rebalancing there is still more work to be done. The recipient reported less mid-back pain and greater mobility in the right shoulder.

In a case like this we recommended a series of appointments to continue with the correction process and looked at lifestyle advice to support what we were aiming to achieve.

How Does Ishta Spinal Touch Work?

The reason that we can see these improvements is because we are correcting the position of the centre of gravity relative to the counterweight. This allows the postural muscles to release their holding pattern.

Following an in-depth plumb line assessment we determine the correct neuromuscular contact point that will bring the centre of gravity and the counterweight back into a state of balance. With the recipient lying in a prone position a very gentle series of rub-outs are applied to the postural muscles, while the neuromuscular contact point is held.

Finger-Tip Pressure

The level of contact during the alignment is 5 gm which is the same as the weight of a 20p piece on the back of the hand. This is enough stimulus to bring about the maximum physiological response in the tissues but will not initiate fascial guarding. With this level of contact we allow the body to change as much as it is able to at each appointment. As you can see from the photos above this can be dramatic even in a young healthy person.

After Care Advice

The after care advice we give at the end of each appointment is very important as the muscles respond to habitual movements so we need to encourage the recipient to think about and introduce changes in the way they use their body. For example in the case above, the young lady was a keen horse rider and regularly mucked out the stables, so the advice included working from the opposite side, in her case the left side, when doing this task.

More Information: To watch a five-minute video of an assessment and alignment please go to www.ishtaspinaltouch.com where you can also find information on training.



Sue Weller and Allyn Edwards are Chiropractors and have been in practice since 1990. They have had individual practices in London and Liverpool and now have a very busy joint practice in Staffordshire specialising in treating people with structural and postural problems. They became the European tutors in Ishta Spinal Touch in 1998 and run training courses for existing body work practitioners.

The training is a Seven-Module course delivered over 6 months, with a mix of attendance and on-line learning. Midlands based. Next courses begin 1st & 2nd of March. Full information at: www.ishtaspinaltouch.com/PractitionerCourse.html

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