



Postural Care Awareness



What is Postural Care?

We all need to look after our posture. Whether it's sitting up straight so we are eye level with our computer, getting our seating right when driving or not bending over our mobile phone or other device, we realise as we get older that we will have aches and pains if we don't look after our posture. Living a lifestyle where we don't move much can also affect our posture and our general health.

Some people, including those who are disabled, who have had a stroke or the elderly, struggle to move their own bodies. For these groups of people, and to a lesser extent the general public, poor posture over time can lead to changes in body shape,

health complications and sometimes living in pain.

Postural care is any intervention which protects a person's body shape. There are many ways to look after your posture. Some of these involve being more active such as taking part in sport, regular walking and exercise.

Some people may need therapeutic positioning and the use of equipment such as appropriate seating, wheelchairs and night-time positioning equipment. These methods should be regularly reviewed to make sure they continue to suit the individual and their current situation.

Who needs Postural Care?



We all need to be aware of our posture, so we can stay healthy and active. People with long term disabilities or health conditions that affect their movement are most at risk of having health complications resulting from poor posture, and so may need support from people trained in postural care.

POSTURAL CARE MYTHS

- ✘ If you have poor posture, it's inevitable your body shape will change.**
If you find it difficult to move, your body can change its shape and this can cause health complications. Although some people may be more at risk of this happening, it is not inevitable and can be improved or prevented with good postural care support.
- ✘ You have to use night time positioning all night.**
People naturally move at night and might not want to remain in the same position for hours. You don't have to use night time positioning all night; a few hours regularly will still help your posture.
- ✘ My healthcare professionals are in charge of my postural care.**
Postural care is only successful if there is an equal partnership between the person who is having difficulties with their posture, their family and professionals. People need to self-manage and be in control of their own health and wellbeing wherever possible.
- ✘ By adulthood, you have stopped growing so there is no need to support you with postural care.**
Adults as well as children need postural care support. Due to gravity pulling our bodies over time, our posture continues to change and some of us need support with this.
- ✘ Wheelchairs are for mobility.**
A wheelchair is not just about mobility, a wheelchair should enable an individual to have a life! A good wheelchair will provide comfortable supportive positioning and can be used to help a person change position during the day. Wheelchairs also need to carry equipment and communication aids – a wheelchair is a mobile inclusion device!
- ✘ Once all of the equipment is in place, you are sorted!**
Over time, you and your circumstances may change and the equipment you use may need to change as well.

Who's responsible for Postural Care?



Lots of people are responsible for an individual's postural care. The person with the most responsibility is the person with postural care needs him/herself. Their family and school should also help on a day to day basis. Nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists should be trained in good postural care techniques and will support individuals with significant postural care needs.



Join the postural care awareness campaign!



Postural care is important for a wide range of people. We have developed some videos that explain the importance of different types of postural care for different types of people - watch and share them from: www.youtube.com/user/ChangingOurLives



On the far left we have Suzy, who will explain the importance of sitting correctly when working at a computer. On her right is Charlie and Kara, who explain their ordinary lives whilst using wheelchairs. Next we have Harry, who needed postural care after a stroke. Finally, Katie explores how postural care can be fun, through learning how to ski.

Get in Touch: **#GotMyBack @positive_lives**
You can also complete our survey on your views and experiences of postural care at: <https://surveyplanet.com/59280a112237ce4c3134bff5>

Wheeling through life - a different perspective



Katy Evans is a Quality of Life Reviewer at Changing Our Lives. Here are her thoughts on life in a wheelchair and postural care...

Society might lead people to believe that being in a wheelchair is one of the worst things that can happen. Tragic films depict people's ruined lives 'confined' to a wheelchair and magazines report people overcoming various ailments to be 'free' of their wheelchairs. It's easy to see why parents of disabled children are put under immense pressure to get their children on their feet.

Rather than being a burden or failure, my wheelchair has liberated me and given me independence which would have been impossible without it. When I went to college my wheelchair gave me the opportunity to be a teenager, going out with my friends, pushing boundaries and exploring new cities. My wheelchair has given me the ability to conserve my energy so I can direct it into living my life. I get ridiculously sentimental about my wheelchairs because of the massive part they play in my life through the worst and best times. It carried me at my best friend's funeral and the same chair propelled me onto the stage to collect my certificate at my university graduation.

My wheelchair has allowed me to have an assistance dog. The charity, Canine Partners, matched me with a beautiful Doodle called Folly. Right from our first weekend together I have been using my electric wheelchair to 'walk' her and we have gone far and wide. People often ask me who walks Folly and struggle to understand this can be easily done in a chair. In fact, it's an advantage. Being an active dog, Folly enjoys the fast pace my chair can go and we can go further than most people can walk.

I lead an active life and highly value my independence so wheelchair functionality is very important to me. I need postural support to stop my body leaning to the left but I didn't like the 'boxed in' feeling some support made me feel by being too restrictive. Instead, wheelchair services custom made a backrest which gave me the necessary support whilst still allowing me to move. Folly was also factored in; wheelchair services gave me a swing away arm for a plastic treat box and allowed the lead attachment to be secured so I would not need to bend too far to adjust Folly's lead.

In my experience wheelchairs are often associated with phrases such as 'confinement' and 'wheelchair bound' but my wheelchair has liberated me and given me the freedom to have countless adventures which would have been impossible.



Changing Our Lives

Changing Our Lives is a rights based organisation. We work with disabled people and people with lived experience of mental health difficulties of all ages as partners, finding solutions to social injustice and health inequalities.

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