

# Self-treatment of the slump posture

## Part 1: Beginner exercises

Many of us find that we have become more slumped over than we would like. This can be more than just an unpleasant cosmetic issue, but be a hidden cause of musculoskeletal stress or pain. Conditions such as headache, jaw pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, numbness or tingling in the arms or hands, or shoulder blade pain can all arise without any injury, yet be due to cumulative factors associated with the repetitive strain of poor posture!

Modern society's emphasis on sitting begins to stoop us over even before we are in our 20s. By the time we are working a desk job hunched over for hours on end our bodies ability to adapt or compensate for this is already vanishing. When symptoms have arisen the problem is usually fully established and a program including appropriate postural advice, manual treatment (chiropractic and soft tissue), and self-treatment exercises are needed to help us re-establish a flexible and strong posture.

Some very simple exercises are shown here to help you begin to restore a more upright posture.

### Brügger relief position

(See also Liebenson CS. Advice for the clinician and patient: The

Brügger relief position. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies* 1999 3: 147–149.

#### Your starting position:

- Perch at the very edge of a chair
- Place your feet so that they are farther apart than your hips
- Turn your feet out slightly
- Tuck your chin in slightly

#### The exercise

- Breathe into your abdomen
- Then exhale actively while  
→Turning your palms out with extended fingers  
→and raising your breastbone slightly.

Repetitions: 2–3.

Frequency: every 20–30 min when sitting for extended periods of time.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

### Wall lean

#### Your starting position:

- Perch at the edge of a chair with legs slightly apart and turned out.
- Lean forward and support your head on folded arms propped against the wall,
- The chair should be positioned at a distance from the wall which creates a fulcrum permitting your mid-back to

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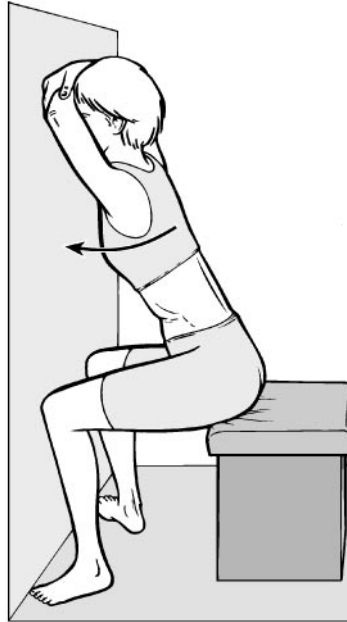
**Fig. 1** Brügger relief position.

fall towards the wall when you are leaning forward  
 → If your low back is arching too much the chair is probably too close to the wall  
 → If your low back is rounding backwards too much the chair is probably too far from the wall

- Keep your chin slightly tucked in.
- Avoid shrugging your shoulders up towards your ears.

**The exercise:**

- Once in the proper position breathe in (you will notice that your mid-back rounds backwards slightly)



**Fig. 2** Wall lean.

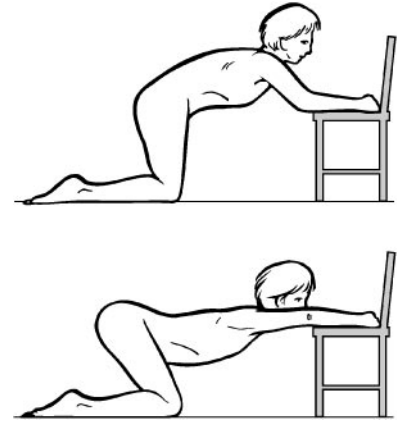
- Then let your breath go while you let your breast bone collapse towards the wall
- When almost out of breath actively exhale or cough to help bring your chest closer to the wall.

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

**The upper back cat**

**Your starting position:**

- Kneel on the floor facing a chair or gymnastic ball.
- Place your forearms on the chair.
- Move your knees away from the chair until your hips can be



**Fig. 3** Upper back cat.

positioned over your knees with your thighs straight up and down (vertical).

- Your elbows should be slightly bent while being sure not to push with your arms into the chair.

**The exercise:**

- Begin by rounding your back up.
- Then let it fall towards the floor.
- Your head and neck just follow the movement.
- You should ‘feel’ this in your mid-back especially when you let your back fall to the floor.

**Common errors to avoid:**

- Arms are too straight or are pushing into the chair.
- Hips are not over knees, but are too close to the ankles. Thighs are not up and down (vertical).

Repetitions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_