

BBC Learning English
6 Minute English
Stand up straight!



NB: This is not a word for word transcript

Kate: Hello, I'm Kate and this is 6 Minute English...and thanks to Rosie for joining me today! Hello, Rosie.

Rosie: Hi Kate

Kate: Now, Rosie, one thing I always notice about you is that you always sit up very straight, with your shoulders back and head held high....

Rosie: You're not the first person to say that to me. It's because I have a bad back so I always try to make sure my posture is really good.

Kate: So, you have what we call **a good posture**. You never **slouch** or **hunch** over your desk as so many people seem to do.

Rosie: Well, I try not to. Slouching and hunching are other words for not sitting up straight. I try not to do that - it's just a habit really...

Kate: Well, you'll be pleased to know some of the benefits of your good posture is you will feel less tired, get fewer headaches, you will sleep better and look slimmer!

Rosie: Wow – well, I think that's more than enough reasons to keep me standing and sitting up straight.

Kate: I agree. Before we go any further, here's my question for this week. As many of us know, poor posture can cause back pain. In the UK, how many working days do you think are lost every year due to people staying off work with back problems?
Is it:

- a: five million
- b: five thousand
- c: five hundred.

Rosie: answers.

Kate: We'll find out the correct answer at the end of the programme. Now we're going to hear from a lady called Jo Kushar, who a trained nurse and teaches **deportment** - another word for describing the way someone walks and stands. She believes that the British have the worst posture in Europe! Let's listen. What problems did she see people suffering from in connection with their bad posture?

Extract 1

'A lot of people were coming to me with postural issues – tension, neck, shoulder problems, RSI, back pain. So I was having to give them exercises to do to address those problems. Then I realised that it was very tied up with issues of self confidence and the way people perceive themselves and the stresses and the strains that modern day brings.'

Rosie: She mentioned a variety of problems there – tension, neck and shoulder problems, RSI and back pain.

Kate: That's right. Let's explain some of them. **Tension** is when all the muscles feel tight and stressed. She also mentioned neck and shoulder problems and **RSI**. Can you explain what **RSI** is Rosie?

Rosie: **RSI** stands for 'repetitive strain injury' and I actually suffer a bit from this myself. It's a pain caused by repeating the same action over and over again. It could be from carrying a heavy bag every day, reading a book while looking down or speaking on a mobile phone for a long period of time in the wrong position. I get it sometimes from computer work and typing.

Kate: Unfortunately, a lot of problems are becoming increasingly common in today's world of sitting at computers or desks for long periods of time and many of us not walking correctly.

Let's hear that extract again and see if you can hear the expression the speaker uses for all these problems put together.

Extract 1 (repeated)

'A lot of people were coming to me with postural issues – tension, neck, shoulder problems, RSI, back pain.'

Rosie: The expression she used was '**postural issues**' – this refers to all problems connected with bad posture.

Kate: Well one of the ways we can avoid developing these **postural issues** is by making sure we walk properly. Let's listen to the next extract. What does the speaker say are the main benefits of walking well?

Text 2

'If you walk well, you exercise all your muscles in the right way, in a balanced way.'

Rosie: She said if you walk well, you exercise all your muscles in the right way. You are balanced.

Kate: Yes, well that makes sense. Now let's listen to how she advises we walk. What two important things does she say we should be doing?

Text 3

'We walk with our feet. We need to pick the knees up. That's the first stage for walking well – is to pick your knees up. The second is to keep the step really short. Shorten your step, to find your natural alignment.'

Rosie: The two main things she advises to walk well are to pick the knees up and to keep our steps short in order to find our natural alignment. Sounds slightly odd to me but I'll try it anyway.

Kate: Yes, so we have to pick our knees up and shorten our step. This will help us find our **natural alignment**, she said - which means the way our back is supposed to be without any strain or stress being placed on it by the way we walk.

Rosie: Yes, I'm going to remember all that.

Kate: So now it's time now for the answer to today's question. Rosie, I asked you how many business days were lost due to sick days caused by back pain in the UK.

Was it: a: five million
b: five thousand
c: five hundred.

Rosie: answers

Kate: And you were And a quick re-cap of the vocabulary we've come across today:

good posture

slouch

hunch

deportment

tension

RSI

natural alignment

Well, that's all we've got time for at today. Thanks for joining me today and keep walking tall! Good bye!