



# NEWSLETTER

YOUR HEALTH IS OUR PRIORITY

EMPOWERALASKA.COM

APRIL 2024



Contact us today to set up a  
**FREE 10-MINUTE  
POSTURE  
CONSULTATION**  
with one of our specialists!

## A Comprehensive Look at How Posture Affects the Shoulder



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**EMPOWER PHYSICAL THERAPY WON  
BEST OF ANCHORAGE  
& BEST OF THE VALLEY**

*Thank You!*



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**Shoulder pain is an all-too-common complaint, making routine activities like lifting, typing, and even sleeping difficult. It seems like every week we get a patient who comes to us with shoulder pain related to poor postural habits.**

A lot of people know the old song about how the foot bone is connected to the knee bone (and the knee bone is connected to the thigh bone and so on). In the world of physical therapy, we call this regional interdependence. This means something in one area of the body is affecting another area. As the song says: it's all connected.

Well, this is definitely true when it comes to the functioning of our shoulder joints. Poor postural habits and prolonged slumped postures put the shoulder in a vulnerable position, making it susceptible to pain or injury. The good news is our therapists at Empower Physical Therapy have extensive training in identifying all the factors that are contributing to your shoulder pain and, most importantly, how to resolve them, one by one!

### How Posture Impacts the Shoulder

One significant factor contributing to shoulder pain is Upper Crossed Syndrome (UCS). This condition is characterized by postural changes that affect how the muscles of our upper back and shoulder girdle work, which in turn affects the normal movement patterns in the entire upper portion of the body.

The classic signs of Upper Crossed Syndrome include:

- **Forward head posture:** The head is positioned forward in relation to the shoulders.
- **Rounded shoulders:** The shoulders are rounded forward, causing the upper back to appear hunched.
- **Increased thoracic kyphosis:** The upper back has an increased curvature, leading to a rounded appearance.
- **Protracted shoulder blades:** The shoulder blades are positioned more forward and away from the spine.
- **Weak deep neck flexors:** The muscles at the front of the neck that help stabilize the head are weak.
- **Tight pectoral muscles:** The muscles in the chest area are tight and may contribute to the rounded shoulder posture.
- **Weak scapular stabilizers:** The muscles that stabilize the shoulder blades are weak, leading to altered movement patterns.

These issues often lead to shoulder pain, limited range of motion, and impaired muscle function. Although the signs are common in a lot of people, not everyone with these signs will have the same symptoms. This is why it is essential to consult one of our physical therapists to identify your specific needs and design a tailored treatment plan that addresses your situation.

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# A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT HOW POSTURE AFFECTS THE SHOULDER



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## The Role of Physical Therapy in Resolving Your Pain

The first step to resolving your shoulder pain is a comprehensive evaluation. Our physical therapists will conduct a thorough history and physical exam that includes an assessment of your posture as well as the function of your shoulder blade musculature to identify any obvious changes to muscle activation and movement patterns.

Based on the assessment, our physical therapists will design tailored exercise regimens that address not only muscle length and strength but also neuromuscular factors. This could lead to more lasting relief and functional improvement.

Our team uses a functional approach that is rooted in neurology. We consider the interaction between your nervous systems, biomechanics of your spine and shoulder joints, as well as muscle function. This allows us to not only identify and address any imbalances in muscle length and strength but also from neuromuscular factors like muscle recruitment.

These exercises may include work on your spinal joint mobility and strengthening exercises to correct any postural dysfunctions contributing to your conditions. Our team spends a lot of time educating you about how you are holding and moving your body to

ensure you have the tools to train your body in the proper movement patterns that help to correct imbalances and offer lasting relief.

## Take the First Step Towards Lasting Relief Today

If you're experiencing persistent shoulder pain, limited range of motion, or discomfort in your upper body, the time to act is now. These signs are not just distressing; they can have a long-term impact on your quality of life and overall well-being.

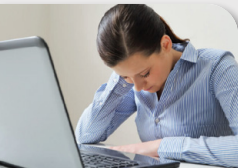
**Reach out to Empower Physical Therapy today for a comprehensive assessment and personalized treatment plan designed to restore balance to your muscles, improve your posture, and, most importantly, alleviate your pain!**

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**833.605.1928**

**ANCHORAGE:**  
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# EMPOWER PERFORMANCE ERGONOMICS



## Achieving the Ideal Posture: A Roadmap to Optimal Alignment

As soon as someone says the word posture, people straighten right up, only to slump back down in a matter of minutes. Unfortunately, there are also a lot of misunderstandings about what "good" posture is.

At Empower Physical Therapy we understand that your "ideal" posture is based on your unique characteristics and life situation. Rather than compare you to someone else, we'll help you find the posture that creates harmony and balance in your body.

## Here's an Overview of What to Strive for with Posture

**Head:** Your head should be positioned over the spine. This helps maintain the natural curvature of the cervical spine (i.e., the neck), ensures the head is neither leaning too far forward nor tilting backward, and prevents undue strain.

**Shoulders:** Your shoulders should be gently pulled back and relaxed, not slouched forward. This posture

opens the chest, allowing unrestricted breathing and optimal circulation.

**Spine:** The spine exhibits three primary curves: cervical (neck), thoracic (mid-back), and lumbar (lower back). Good posture ensures these curves remain intact, avoiding excessive arching or rounding.

Our therapists will develop a personalized plan tailored to your unique needs based on the assessment. This plan may include exercises, stretches, and techniques to address specific posture-related challenges.

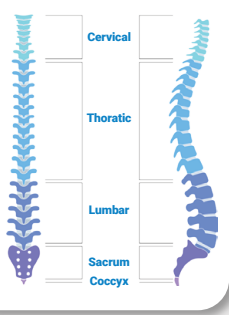
## Embrace Your Journey to Ideal Posture Today for a Healthier Tomorrow

Ideal posture is about alignment, balance, and harmony within your body. Our therapists are your partners, helping you identify your unique ideal posture and providing the guidance and support needed to attain it.

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# GO TO THE PAIN... NOT THROUGH THE PAIN



The days of “no pain, no gain” are hopefully in the past. The idea of emphasizing pushing through discomfort to achieve results is not an effective solution for most people dealing with a painful condition, injury, or chronic condition. In fact, recent research suggests that a more holistic approach is effective and, indeed, safer for patients.

Pain is our body's way of letting us know that something is happening in the body. When a nerve ending is triggered, an impulse travels to the brain, alerting us that something is happening. It is a warning sign or an alarm. How this impulse is interpreted varies from person to person and is influenced by a multitude of factors.

Aggressively pushing through pain can worsen the underlying issues and potentially result in long-term damage. The key is getting help from people who work with painful conditions every day, like our therapists at Empower Physical Therapy!

## How Physical Therapy Can Help You Find Relief

In cases of musculoskeletal disorders and injuries, applying excessive stress on already agitated tissues can prolong the healing process and even cause further injury. In comparison, going to the pain but not through it means cautiously approaching the edge of discomfort without crossing it, which can help your body progress without delaying your recovery.

Our objective is to work within a “therapeutic window”: a range of activities that stimulates the body's natural healing mechanisms without triggering negative responses.

At Empower Physical Therapy, we educate our patients about pain to help them understand their conditions better and actively participate in treatment. Our therapist can help you learn “pacing,” where activities are broken down into manageable parts, helping you to avoid extreme ups and downs of feeling good one day and an increase in pain and inactivity the next.

**By respecting the body's pain signals and working within a therapeutic window, our approach aims to achieve long-term functional gains without the risks associated with pushing through pain.**

# EMPOWERED PATIENTS

*“I can move, drive, and I am excited to hold my new daughter with no pain.”*

“I have been coming to Empowered for over a year. They helped me with my neck injury and recovering from surgery. I can move, drive, and I am excited to hold my new daughter with no pain. Great staff and great place to recover. No matter the size of injury. **Forever grateful to Empower Physical Therapy for helping me live a normal life again.**”

—Jared C., actual 5 star review

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## SERVICES OFFERED

- Personal Training
- Injury Prevention
- Work Ergonomic Assessment
- Stay Strong Program
- Athletic Performance Improvement



## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

## ARE YOU IN PAIN? COME SEE EMPOWER PT!

*Schedule your appointment today!*

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## INTRODUCING OUR “STAY STRONG” PROGRAM



We are thrilled to announce an exciting new program designed specifically for our graduating patients – **“Stay Strong.”** At Empower, we understand that maintaining progress and good habits after treatment is crucial. That’s why we’ve brought on board Nikki Scott, an experienced Exercise Physiologist and personal trainer, to lead this initiative.

### Why Stay Strong?

Many of our patients nearing graduation often ask about post-treatment support to continue their fitness journey and prevent the recurrence of problems. With **“Stay Strong,”** you can now benefit from Nikki’s expertise in strengthening, coordination, mobility, and injury prevention. She is here to guide you towards a happy and fulfilling life!

### We Offer Individual and Group Classes

To cater to your unique needs, we are offering both individual and group classes as part of the **“Stay Strong”** program. Whether you prefer personalized attention or enjoy the camaraderie of group workouts, we have you covered!

### Get in Touch!

If you’re interested in learning more about how our **“Stay Strong”** program can benefit you, don’t hesitate to reach out to us. This package is for those who have completed Physical Therapy and are looking for a way to keep progressing and strengthening in desired areas. We are excited to extend this opportunity not only to our Empower community but to the entire Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley. **Take the next step towards a stronger and healthier future and schedule your FREE 10 minute consult today!**



[Schedule An Appointment](#)

*And Stay Strong!*

COME BACK TO PHYSICAL THERAPY! WASILLA: 833.605.1928 & ANCHORAGE: 833.799.1296