

Well-BALANCED

by Camber Clemence



Book cover photo
by John Ramspott

80% of Americans suffer from lower-back pain at some point in their lives. This can be caused by several factors. Consider your posture and how you spend the majority of your day; many are either hunched over a desk or behind the wheel of a car. In addition to the 40-odd hours per week that most employed Americans spend working at a desk, they also spend an average of 52 minutes driving daily – this adds up to about 316 driving hours (or 13 days) a year.

Simply put, our bodies are not meant to sit this way.

Well-balanced posture is so much more than just sitting or standing up “straight.” According to Dr. Steven Weiniger, “Postural balance is the ability to control your body’s position in space and keep your body upright and stable, especially when challenged.”

Weiniger, a nationally recognized expert on posture and anti-aging, has trained thousands of doctors and health pro-

fessionals on how to use his StrongPosture™ protocols, and has since released the book *Stand Taller, Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy*.



Dr. Steven Weiniger
Photo by Ed Wolkis Photography

“The goal is to make people realize the importance of their posture,” Weiniger explained. “You should be doing something for your posture – you should be taking an annual posture picture, working on strong posture and being aware of your posture.”

Being aware of your posture is the first

step to strengthening it, as our posture is mostly unconscious. At best, according to *Stand Taller*, we can focus on and be conscious of posture for just a few minutes before our minds wander; the vast majority of our days are spent thinking about things other than posture.

“You need to connect how you’re actually moving with how you think you’re moving,” Weiniger said.

One suggestion for developing awareness of your posture is the One-Leg Balance Test, which compares your perception of your center of gravity to the true reality:

One-Leg Balance Test

1. Stand up straight and lift your left knee so that your foot comes off the ground (preferably creating a 90° angle). Slowly count until you (a) put your foot down or (b) wave your arms for balance.
2. Repeat with right knee.
3. Record times.

You should, according to Weiniger, be able to balance on each leg for at least 20 seconds. If you are unable to accomplish this, then you may not be as well-balanced as you think you are while standing straight, or your muscles may be too weak to keep your body in that position for that long. Weiniger encourages those who are unable to balance to feel encouraged rather than discouraged, since being conscious of a problem is the first step to fixing it!

Stand Taller, Live Longer also introduces you to the Five Principles of Posture:

- **Motion** The body is designed to move.
- **Balance** Achieving physical equilibrium.
- **Patterns** The pattern of a body's chain of movement follows the path of least resistance.
- **Compensation** The body learns to move in the patterns you teach it, and pain teaches the body to move differently.
- **Adaptation** Changes in posture and motion cause the body to change.

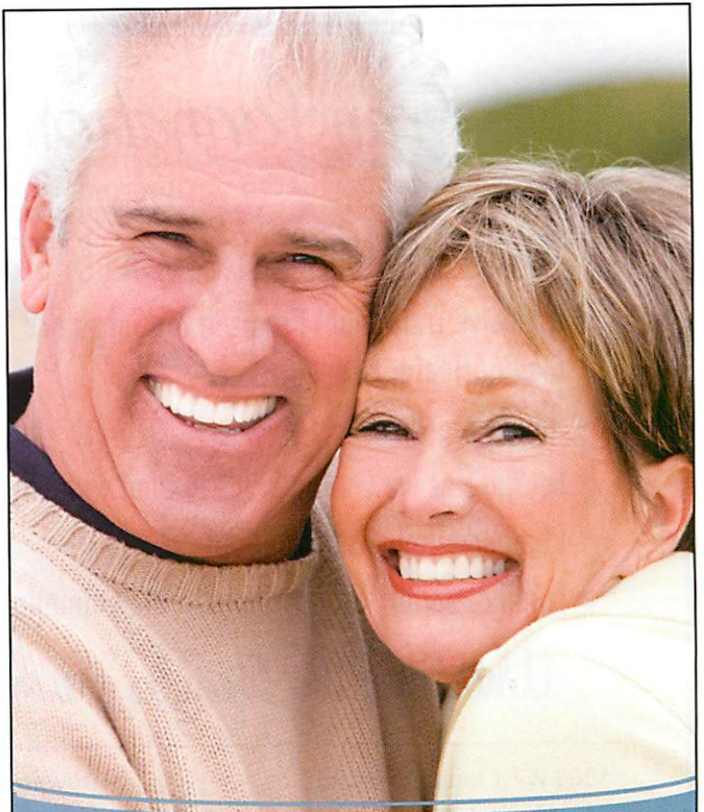
These principles are introduced as the reader moves through the seven-week StrongPosture™ program following the BAM principle. As written in *Stand Taller*, "StrongPosture™ depends upon Strong Balance, Strong Alignment and Strong Motion. The best way to strengthen posture is by focusing for a few moments each day on each of these three interrelated factors: balance, alignment and motion (BAM)."

Subject to individual needs and ability, *Stand Taller* suggests focusing on balance three times daily, alignment twice a day, and motion once a day. As the seven-week StrongPosture™ program progresses, participants are given different movements to try; for instance, one may progress from the Ball Sit as part of their motion focus to performing Supermans on their exercise ball.

"If you aren't doing anything to make the body move differently, how can you expect it to change?" asked Weiniger. "Take a few minutes a day to work on it. You can't go through your entire day wondering if you're standing up straight – that's not the point. Keep on being active as you get older; help your body feel good today; focus on your mental health and attitude. Take just that little bit of time to create a huge difference in your body."

When you start to slouch and you feel a little ache in your back, remember this: good posture reduces your risk of arthritis, prevents muscular pain and keeps your joints in their correct alignment while making you look (and feel) more confident. So, chin up! **PBG**

For more information about *Stand Taller, Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy*, visit www.standtallerlivelonger.com. More information about Steven Weiniger and his upcoming seminars can be found at www.posturepractice.com.



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