The Posture Specialist is a market identity for DCs in the 21st century.

Posture is growing concern for our patients that's continuing to grow as we hunch over computers and smart phones, especially for Baby Boomers who want to stay active into old age.

The PosturePractice framework promotes posture as important to health as a public service, encouraging awareness publicly and consciousness personally. Posture-specialized doctors empower people to move better by training focused control of motion and stabilization. And bio-mechanic posture concepts communicate a congruent message for patients, other health professionals and society audiences of the value of moving well—which includes getting adjusted.

A posture picture is the first step to building consciousness, and it's key to garnering insights about a patient's biomechanics.

Posture assessment is visual palpation.

With the PostureZone model, structural distortions and adaptations at the root of biomechanical problems can be deduced by observing how the head is balanced over the torso, the torso over the pelvis, and the pelvis over the legs. Plus, patients love when you see dramatic changes on follow-up pictures.

The next step is engaging people to actively take part in their health by teaching them to control and improve how they stand, balance and move—in other words, to strengthen their posture. The idea of functionally improving posture opens a seemingly simple question: What is posture?
Balance is the interface between our perception of our body in space, and HOW we maintain that position.

In common-sense language, balance is what we do to stay vertical. It’s the moment-by-moment overlay of our internal somatic map with external reality. From a neurology perspective, it’s the functional correlation between positional afferents and motor efferents.

Our sense of balance is a neurologic construct from visual, vestibular and proprioceptive inputs. From the perspective of the CNS, posture can therefore be viewed as an emergent sense. On the sensory side, proprioceptive afferents and vestibular input conveys positional data. On the motor side, it’s the sub-cortical firing of skeletal muscle fibers to keep the afferent input within an acceptable range, a range which translates as “keeping your balance.” In other words, we avoid falling with a split-second coordination of sensory input from three sources for precise fine skeletal muscle motor control within a second or two to maintain mechanical alignment in three dimensions with a net vertical vector force of zero. The astounding miracle is we do it without thinking!

Balance, Alignment & Motion—the three elements of posture

Looking at balance with a bit more granularity, we see constant subtle movement—even when we stand still. As we shift to-and-fro there’s an ongoing tradeoff in how we align our body mass, position and motion to stay vertical. It’s a dance with three partners, which we call the three elements of posture: Balance, Alignment, and Motion (BAM).
The elements of both posture and balance all combine and interrelate in a sensorimotor swirl. Visual input results in muscle shifts, which changes proprioceptive input. And Alignment affects Balance and Motion, and Motion affects how you Balance and Align.

The unconscious split-second feedback and feedforward compensations of postural sway we use to "keep our balance" can be observed and mapped with technologies from professional force plates to consumer devices like the Nintendo WiiFit. Disciplines like Yoga, Pilates, Tai-chi and the StrongPosture® exercise protocols share the goal of improving and strengthening posture, balance and control...and all help correct perceptual-motion errors by aligning subjective perception of body position with objective reality.

The StrongPosture® exercises work by systematically correcting common sensorimotor errors with MUST vs TRY cueing, by PostureZone. Initially developed for different staff members to cue exercises consistently and focus motor activity on one region at a time, with the publication of Stand Taller~Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy, people across the world have discovered StrongPosture® exercise. Consistent focused posture training for a few minutes each day improves body awareness and helps people move better in everything they do.

StrongPosture® exercise protocols retrain control with exercises arranged along three tracks. Each track focuses on one element of posture to correct sensorimotor errors by aligning perceptions with reality.

- **Balance** track focuses on aligning vestibular input with reality to progressively challenge balance while standing tall
- **Alignment** track uses a vertical wall as an objective reference to kinesthetically correct the proprioceptive alignment of the 4 PostureZones
- **Motion** track uses an exercise ball for proprioceptive focus to objective reality while moving with balance and alignment
The secret is striving to keep input from some postural elements constant, so subtle compensations become perceptible, addressable and subject to improvement. The TRY cues focus control on the target region's balance, alignment and/or motion, while the MUST cues minimize compensatory motion in non-targeted regions.

By precisely defining exercises and requiring adherence to objective references, protocols train a systematic focus on one kinetic chain link at a time. This is especially valuable in a clinical setting, because when rehabilitative exercises are protoced with clear imperatives such as "you MUST do this" and then "TRY to do that", changes in ability to perform the therapeutic activity also become an objective measure to track improvement in functional posture control.

When implemented systematically with each exercise performed perfectly to an individual's ability, the "MUST" vs "TRY" cueing protocols can identify and help strengthen the weakest point in an individual's unique kinetic chain. And in addition to tracking improvement, someone's inability to perform a specific progression can be diagnostic of impediments to free motion, suggesting a therapeutic intervention (i.e. Restoring the potential to full range segmental motion by removing deep mechanical restrictions and facilitating neurologic control- the unique contribution of the chiropractic adjustment).

**StrongPosture® Exercise: A valuable public service**

When the public looks at a chiropractic practice, what do they see? It can vary tremendously, but this author's assumption is that an adjustment is being performed. And while it can affect much more, a chiropractic adjustment is unlocking restrictions in the kinetic chain.

Simply freeing potential motion sets the physical and communications stage to regain control of that motion. Retraining control of motion and posture is the goal of StrongPosture® exercise. And the connection between restoring motion and retraining posture is why promoting posture consciousness and StrongPosture® exercise is a public service DCs can use to increase the real and perceived value of chiropractic care.

Through the trends of both clinical research and media, it has become clear that people are interested in chiropractic care and how our services can help them to live longer, healthier lives. As we venture into a new era of healthcare practices, it makes sense to position the chiropractic profession into a place of value, both in the eyes of other wellness professionals as well as those of the consumer.

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**About the Author**

Dr. Steven Weiniger is an internationally recognized posture expert who has trained thousands of doctors, therapists, trainers, and other health and wellness professionals to help people stand taller with the StrongPosture® exercise protocols.

Dr. Weiniger literally wrote the book on improving posture, Stand Taller ~ Live Longer: An Anti-Aging Strategy, and his team at BodyZone promotes posture awareness with the free Posture-Zone screening app for iPhone. His articles and expertise on posture, anti-aging, exercise, and practice management have been featured extensively in professional journals and mainstream media.