

Instructions for Everything (Finally!)



Photo by: Bruce Alan Johnson

People often ask: “Dr. Russell, since you are an expert, can’t you tell me the right way to do everything?” Of course, the only gracious answer is “Why, yes.” Some good ways to sit, stand and lie down are outlined below

Here are some easy ways to sit, stand, walk and sleep, in case you feel like giving up your current strategies and starting over from scratch!



Sitting: Put a block or a 4-inch ball at the back bottom of your chair and scoot your butt right back against it. This will make it easier not to slouch. Using a lot of effort to have “good posture” or “sit right” will never work, so it has to be relatively simple and easy. You can also put a ball behind your ribcage in a symmetrical or asymmetrical position. If you put it there, it will fall when you start to crane your neck toward the computer screen in hour ten of editing that fascinating spreadsheet.

On an airplane or in a car, you can move the ball to under one thigh or the other, or put it anywhere on your back, symmetrical or not. Keep moving it around. Animals are not meant to hold the same position for any length of time, even if that position is “correct”. Remember, you and I are animals.

Standing: When you stand and walk, think of ONE of the following things:

1. No matter what you’re doing, orient your constantly moving, breathing ribcage as if it were a spotlight facing down that will always cast its light all around your feet. Don’t hold it there. Instead, “refocus it” the way you would refocus your eyes to keep them on a moving target.

2. You are more like a flamingo than I think you realize. Go to the post office if you need verification of this, but humans stand on one leg, not two. Don't try to stand on two legs. It's unnatural! But do fool around with shifting your weight from one foot to another. And if you're in line at the Post Office, spend the time wisely by experimenting with taking the weight completely off one foot. You can do this while leaving that foot on the floor or you can actually lift it up if you want attention and praise from the other people waiting.



3. Aim to have the whole spine, from your tail to the top of your head, in line and slightly "in front" of your legs. From tail to skull, think of it all moving a bit forward with your legs staying back, but don't let your low back arch. You may feel that this is impossible but trying will make you stand up better.

Lying down

There's an article from my website about sleeping, which is entertaining and has the info you want about lying down. [December 2010 Newsletter](#)



Walking:

When you walk, land on the outer heel and press the floor back with the base of your big toe.

Think of the inner volume of your body (which is a water volume for the most part) as being able to flow upward from its center as you progress forward.

Think of the thigh bones as if they continued up and behind you from your hips. Imagine the hip crease as the spot where the two hips attach to your body. Each time

the left foot goes forward, imagine that the part of the leg that extends up and behind your body swings downward from the center point of the hip joint.

This is my version of an image given to me by [Michael Hanko](#), a genius Alexander Technique and singing teacher with whom I study and collaborate. Imagine that you are a seahorse (if you're not doing that already). Without doing any movement, feel the fact that your head curves forward at the top, and your tailbone curves forward at its bottom. Again, don't make that happen. Just realize that it is anatomically true when you walk and you'll move more easily and be taller.