



Frequently Asked Questions About Posture/My Hips Are Doing What?

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Although there are many possible areas of abnormal biomechanics, common (and sometimes overlooked) postures are listed here.

Anterior Tilt – With this pelvic imbalance, the pelvis is tilted forward. A good example of this posture is the



very arched back and forward pelvis you see in a gymnast or a pregnant women. In this case, the back of the pelvis is high and the front is low. As a result, back muscles are shortened and tight, and abdominal muscles are long and often weak. Leg muscles down to the feet and muscles around the ribs, chest, upper back and shoulders will also compensate and adjust to positions that are imbalanced over time. Sometimes people really notice this compensating tightness, and other times they aren't really aware of it until muscle therapy is performed.

Lateral Tilt – In the lateral tile, one side of the pelvis is higher than the other. As a result, one side of low



back is tight and the other is long. Corresponding imbalances develop in the legs, ribs, chest, back and neck as well. Differences from one side to the other may be subtle or obvious, depending on the person and the cause. Usually with a lateral tilt, the person will notice pain on one side and a different type of pain or discomfort on the other. Sometimes people notice pain only on one side.

How do I know if I have this posture?

1. **Look at the wear on your shoes**, if the wear is not even then you know that one leg is doing something different or that your feet are not hitting the ground evenly. This will probably affect the pelvis if left uncorrected. For some it affects their pelvis right away, and therefore affects their back, feet, neck, and/or legs.
2. **If you have experienced any of the overuse injuries listed in the Anterior Tilt Symptoms below** (groin pulls, hamstring tears, shin splints, plantar fasciitis, patellar tendinitis, etc.), then you should definitely consider yourself to have some level of an anterior tilt.

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3. **You have back or neck pain, even if it comes and goes.** This is the most common injury in the workplace today – hands down. Through the US government's health and safety board, new standards are constantly being reviewed to protect safety, but back and neck pain is still a real problem. When this happens your nerves start adjusting to the new setup, but the pattern resurfaces when the "load" hits "maximum".
4. **You have any level of constipation, have difficult menstrual cramps, or have to urinate frequently.** These tilts can affect organ function. The deep muscle in by your groin, called your psoas, can tighten up around the colon, uterus, or bladder and make them stiff and inflexible. Organs are made of muscle, and can pick up tension from related muscles – such as the psoas. See your therapist for an evaluation.

Can I have both types of tilts?

It is common, for both an anterior tilt and a lateral tilt to occur at the same time, but is not always the case. It is immensely helpful to have a trained pair of eyes look at you and tell you what he or she sees. Then you are best able to rebalance the related muscle, nerves, and bones, and any changes made to rebalance you will be long lasting and safe.

Does my doctor/other health professional know this? Because many health care providers do not immediately consider this condition as a cause for many of the pain and discomforts listed above. Many do not look closely at biomechanics. Other health care providers are aware of anterior tilts and lateral tilts, however, and can help you understand and correct this simple imbalance. You may expect to have that provider look at balancing your back and abdominal muscles, as well as stretching and strengthening your leg muscles.

How can I improve caring for myself long-term?

- A. **Follow your self-care protocol** set up for you by your therapist or trainer! It will probably include all or most of the elements listed in the table above. **Thinking about doing it is not the same as actually doing it!** If you notice different things about your body than you have before,
- B. **Check in and make sure things haven't changed.** Body mechanics often change when you change jobs or job-related activities, change hobbies or habits, participate in new sports, begin caring for a new baby, have high emotional stress levels that are not released well...etc. So that you are always doing



the right things to keep yourself balanced, healthy, productive, and injury-free – just check in. Call, email, write...

C. The tough part: although the imbalance is simple, keeping you balanced may be more difficult.

Some people respond to stretching the areas listed above better than others do. Some get great results from resisted stretching techniques, while others do not. There are numerous other methods of relieving muscle pains. Learning how best to troubleshoot your own body "complaints" is a process...so be patient and notice what works well. Then you can build on what you've learned. © 1999 Allison Ishman

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