**Posture Perfect**

**Introduction:** Maintaining good posture is an important part of one’s health. In this lesson, students will learn how to have correct posture. They will learn how to improve and maintain good posture.

**Grade Level and Subject:** 7th and 8th grade Health and P.E.

**TEKS:**
- 7th grade Health 1A, 11B
- 7th grade P.E 4C
- 8th grade P.E. 3G

**Materials:** chalkboard or dry erase board, overhead projector with computer attachment (optional), wall space

**Websites:**

**Activity:** Write the word “posture” on the board. Ask students to brainstorm definitions for posture. Write their responses on the board in a web format.

After students have finished brainstorming, they will demonstrate their idea of correct posture while sitting. Then students will stand and demonstrate correct posture when standing. The teacher will then show the students correct posture. Correct posture is when the three natural curves of the back line up correctly. The three natural curves are found in the neck, upper back, and lower back (see the first website listed above for pictures and instructions for correct posture). Maintaining correct posture is so important because poor posture can cause many health problems. Share these problems with the students. Some of these problems include:
• Improper alignment of bones
• Muscular strain
• Back and neck pain
• Greater strain on joints and ligaments
• Can affect vital organs in the abdominal region of the body
• Can cause postural deformities later in life

People with good posture look confident. Learning how to have good posture helps people feel good about themselves. Good posture especially helps when a person is feeling down or perhaps has something weighing heavy on his/her mind. Standing up straight and tall can immediately give a person a feeling of confidence. Slouching will only contribute to the discouraged feelings the person is experiencing.

Next, students will check their posture (see the first website above for diagrams and further instructions for this exercise). Students will stand with their backs to a wall and their feet about 3 inches from the wall. Students should stand the way they normally stand. Each student should place one hand on their neck and one hand on their lower back. They need to check the space between their hands and the wall. If the students can move their hands a lot between the walls and their bodies, then they do not have correct posture. If their hands only move an inch or so, then they have correct posture. Once students have checked their normal posture, have them stand correctly. Move from student to student, adjusting their posture as needed. Students will retest themselves and compare their normal posture to correct posture.

Bring the students back together as a class. Discuss how to improve one’s posture. Exercise is a vital part of building and maintaining good posture. Strong abdominal muscles are especially important in maintaining good posture. The first website listed above suggests several exercises that help improve posture. Pictures are shown, along with the directions, for these exercises. The teacher can study the exercises and teach them to the students or put the website on a projector and show the class. Students should practice the exercises in class. Encourage students to implement these exercises into their daily lives. Discuss with the students some of the causes of bad posture. In what situations do people often have really poor posture? Sitting at a desk working, watching television, playing video games, eating dinner, and working at the computer are some example of situations in which people often have poor posture. Also, carrying a backpack that is too heavy can contribute to poor posture. Encourage students to think about their posture throughout the day.

**Evaluation:** Evaluate students on their participation in the activity, on the changes they make to their posture, and their ability to demonstrate correct posture.