



# Workplace Posture

## - a body language perspective

By Anna Collins

*How to ensure you're putting your best foot forward in the workplace (literally!).*

The posture protocol from the Downton Abbey era might have seemed strict, but it certainly bred a generation of well-presented ladies: keep your head up (remember the balancing books on your head trick), sit up straight and stand properly. These days, it's easier said than done, as we are driven to work all hours, travel long distances, and find relaxation by collapsing in front of the TV at home. Here are some top tips to guide you on your way to having better posture: »



# 1 Look ahead

Whether it is at a computer screen, a person, or direction of travel, looking straight ahead places less strain on your neck and head than if you stare down at the pavement or iphone or strain it forwards and upwards at the computer. Less strain = less pain. »»







## 2 Find a balanced sitting position

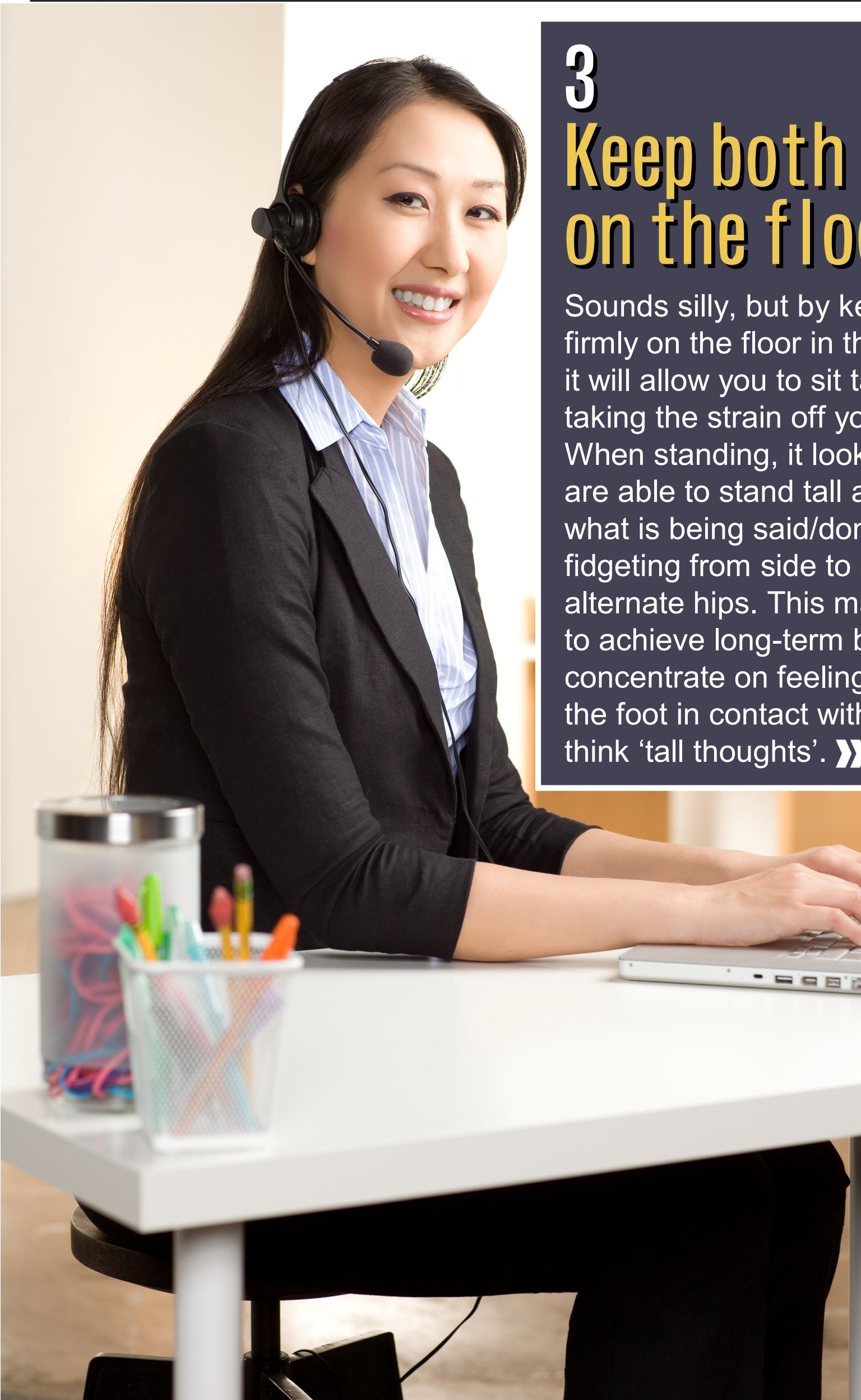
It's all too easy to slump into a chair, (even the so-called ergonomic ones), using the arm and back rests to support your entire body weight, instead of sitting correctly. To do this, take a firm chair or stool, stick your bottom out, then gently place it on the surface. The bony bits you will feel are your 'sitting bones'; then move your upper body around until you find a stable position, not leaning too far forward or backward. It may seem odd at first, but once you get used to it, sitting for long periods of time becomes easier – and makes you look more professional. »»



# 3

## Keep both feet on the floor

Sounds silly, but by keeping both feet firmly on the floor in the exercise above, it will allow you to sit taller for longer, taking the strain off your hips/back. When standing, it looks far better if you are able to stand tall and concentrate on what is being said/done, rather than fidgeting from side to side, sinking into alternate hips. This may not be so easy to achieve long-term by yourself, but concentrate on feeling the full length of the foot in contact with the floor, and think 'tall thoughts'. »



# 4

## Track your toes

All too often, we just walk, without really putting too much thought into the process. In an ideal world, our toes, feet and legs should be tracking in a straight line, but it's very easy to slip into lazy habits. Have a look at how people walk around you – do their toes and feet point in (like a pigeon) or out (like a clown)? Your walking posture says just as much about you as any other form. Try and aim straight – it looks far better. »





# 5

## Remember the basics

When you meet someone for the first time, or go to a business meeting, it can be intimidating. The easiest way to start off on the right foot (no pun intended) is to look people in the eye, offer a firm handshake (no wet fish please), and smile! »»







## 6 Feel alert = look alert

There are plenty of nutritional tricks that will help your posture. Think of your body as a (hopefully) well-oiled machine. In order to function at its best, it needs good energy and treatment. So, large milky coffees with sugary snacks aren't going to be as helpful as good old water and fresh food. If you, like me, find green tea slightly bitter and difficult to contemplate, try white tea. Also, no surprises here, but sleeping at night rather than working through it will also ensure you're more alert. »»



7

# Fake it 'til you make it!



Even if you've been celebrating (or commiserating) with your friends until the wee small hours, don't love your job, or simply don't feel confident in the workplace, it's important not to show it. Another 'easier said than done' message, but you will give off a far better impression if you try some of the above steps. Lowering the head, slouching in a chair, sinking from hip to hip whilst standing will all give the impression of not taking care of yourself, or worse, not caring about your work. Chances are you'll be overlooked for any promotions and may be first on the list to go when the redundancy round kicks in. **Think tall thoughts, lead with your heart, and always remember to smile! »»**

To learn more about posture improvement tap **HERE**



**About the Author****Anna Collins**

Anna Collins graduated with a B.Sc Honours in Biology from the University of St Andrews (Scotland) and has been fascinated with the human body ever since. She has consistently tested the plasticity of her own body to the limits. From childhood onwards, her sporting prowess often took a cyclical path from victory to therapy with painful regularity; pride and dignity often dented as much as the physical being. After university, she worked as a ski instructor in the USA for a few years, and once back in the relative safety of London, worked as a private PA. A chance encounter with Structural Integration (also known as Rolfing), significantly improved her health (mind, body and soul), and she went on to train as a practitioner in Boulder, Colorado.

Having sought both traditional and alternative treatments for different ailments all over the world, she has found that some are more effective or long-lasting than others. None ever quite achieved the holy grail of long-term pain relief. Whilst she feels that structural integration does not hold all the answers, she believes it is the therapy that has had the most dramatic results and long-term changes in her own body.