Clothing covers up many figure faults; however, posture affects our appearance and fit of our clothing. Good posture not only makes one look but feel better. To achieve good posture always, stand, sit, walk and think TALL. The body should be carried in perfect equilibrium—not stiff as a poker but in alignment, with chin, chest, hips and abdomen all in balance.

There are several exercises which one may take regularly to improve poor posture. Height, weight and bone structure may only be a part of our figure problem.

CORRECT STANDING POSTURE

Feet - Stand with your feet parallel, toes straight ahead, with the weight on the balls of your feet.

Knees - Slightly bent and relaxed.

Hips - Tucked in or curled under. A position with the pelvis pulled up in front and down in the back. Walk with your legs from the hips, not just from the knees.

Tummy - Held in. This means when you are sitting, too.

Waistline - You can call it your diaphragm or your middle. No matter what you call it, stretch up and stand tall.

Chest - If you have stretched in the middle, your chest will be where it should be.
Shoulders - If you have tucked in your hips and stretched your waist-line up, the shoulders will be straight. Relax them.

Chin - Keep your chin level with the ground.

Head - Keep your head up and perfectly balanced.

Hands - Keep your hands quiet and relaxed when you are not using them for a specific job. Avoid nervous hand movements as unnecessary handling of your accessories.

TO CORRECT YOUR STANDING POSTURE

Figure 2

Stand sideways in front of a full-length mirror and ask someone to check your posture. The correct "ideal line-up" is a straight line running from the tip of the ears through the shoulder bone, the center of the hip joint, the center of the knee, to the center of the foot. (Figure 2)

Another way to check for a correct posture is to stand with your back to the wall. If your backbone lies flat against the wall, all the way down, from your neck to about six inches below your waist without a hollow in the small of your back then you have correct posture. If your back does not touch the wall all the way, perhaps you would like to try this exercise.
Stand next to a wall, with feet four inches from the wall, and four inches apart, and lean against the wall. (Figure 3) Bend your knees and dig your waist into the wall and push your back up the wall until your legs are almost straight. This may be easier if you bend forward at the hips then slowly stand rolling your back up the wall with the small of your back touching the wall. Lift your chest toward the ceiling. Pull your chin in so that the back of your neck is nearer the wall. Walk away from the wall and maintain this position as long as possible.

Another exercise, is to lie on your back with your knees bent and the soles of your feet flat on the floor. Flatten the back down on the floor by pulling in and up with the abdominal muscles and down with the hip muscles and sliding the hips toward the feet. This exercise is good for a protruding stomach as well as a sway back. (Figure 4)
WALKING POSTURE

Good walking posture is good standing posture in motion. Keep your feet parallel and close together. Swing your legs from the hips, but don't swing your hips. Keep your knees flexed and loose. Let weight roll from heel through the foot and out the toe. Take short steps - about a foot's length. Keep arms close to the body, hands at your side, palms inward. Let them swing slightly. If you can walk around the room with a book on your head, you have learned your lesson for an ideal line-up. (Figure 5)

Walking up stairs - Incline the whole body forward, not just the upper half. Push upward with the back foot, and transfer your weight to the front leg. Now straighten the front knee, and take another easy step.

Walking down stairs - Turn slightly sideways so that you can see the stairs better. Keep erect, bending the back knee until the forward foot touches. In going up or down stairs always put the entire foot on the step.

CORRECT SITTING POSTURE

Using a chair, with a straight, upright back, sit well back on the chair so that your hips touch the back of it. Put your thumbs on the bottom of your ribs and your little finger on the top of your hip bone. Now, pull your ribs as high as possible away from your hips, see how far you can get your ribs up away from your hips. Now stretch the back of your neck behind your ears up as far away from your shoulders as you can. Hold this position while you breathe normally for a couple of minutes. Keep your feet flat on the floor, your knees together and your hands in a relaxed position.

Coordination is the secret of sitting down and standing up gracefully. When
sitting, don't just "plop down". With one foot slightly behind the other and one leg touching the chair, lower yourself into a chair. When getting out of a chair again put one foot a little in front of you to act as a balance. In some chairs it may be necessary to move slightly to the front of the chair before getting up. In both getting up and sitting down, remember to keep the hips and shoulders in alignment. (Figure 6)

A FEW TIPS ON GOOD POSTURE

- In lifting an object from the floor use your leg and shoulder muscles. Bend your knees and keep your shoulders and hips aligned. In this way you substitute leg muscles for back muscles.

- In carrying parcels it is better to carry equally sized ones in each arm rather than carrying all the weight on one arm and hip. When carrying one parcel, stop periodically and change arms so as to equalize the strain.

Good

Figure 7

Bad

Figure 8
- To push a heavy object, use the whole body at the center of the object rather than pushing near the top of the object. Bend your knees and elbows to protect your elbow and shoulder joints. (Figures 9 and 10)

- Working surfaces should be of an adequate height to afford good posture.

- Sitting while you work saves energy; however, to obtain a good posture use a table of adequate height for a working surface, rather than your lap.

- Use correct tools for good posture, as:
  - long-handled equipment to avoid bending
  - a cart to move large quantities of heavy objects.

Posture is the sum total of all the positions and attitudes we take throughout the various activities of each day.