

# 3 Best Ways TO IMPROVE Your Posture



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This publication is presented for information purposes, to increase the public knowledge of developments in the field of strength and conditioning. The program outlined herein should not be adopted without a consultation with your health professional.

Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. You must get your physician's approval before beginning this or any other exercise program.

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# 3 Best Ways TO IMPROVE Your Posture



## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS POSTURE?

If you're sitting here reading this report, there's already a good chance that your posture isn't where it should be and you might not even realize it. Bad posture is something that transcends all demographics, afflicting people from all walks of life on a daily basis.

Posture isn't just something the chiropractor talks about to the BINGO crowd. Posture is something that applies to everyone at every age. From birth to death, posture is one of the most important components to a healthy life and it should never ever be glanced over.



Remember those days back in early grade school when your mom or teacher always yelled at you for slouching at the dinner table or at your desk? You were constantly being told to 'SIT UP TALL!' or 'QUIT SLOUCHING!' And you might have even received a nice slap on the back in hopes of getting you to sit up straight.

You can probably give a very general blanket statement on what posture is but truth be told it isn't as black and white as it might seem.

**Look at it this way, your posture is like the window into your spine. It is a**

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measure of the balance of your spinal column, which is the core of your body.

**Looking from the front, your spine should have perfect vertical alignment. From the side, your spine should have three naturally flowing curves, all helping to support the weight of your body and your head.**

In this balanced, symmetrical position, your head sits on top of your spine in which your spine houses the spinal cord, a vital nerve tract extending from your brain that acts as an intelligence line for your whole body. The proper function of this cord is vital to excellent health, vigor, and performance.

However, with about 65 million Americans suffering from chronic back pain and back pain being the second most common reason for medical visits; the first being a cough, it forces you to stop for a moment and think about how society as a whole arrived at this point.



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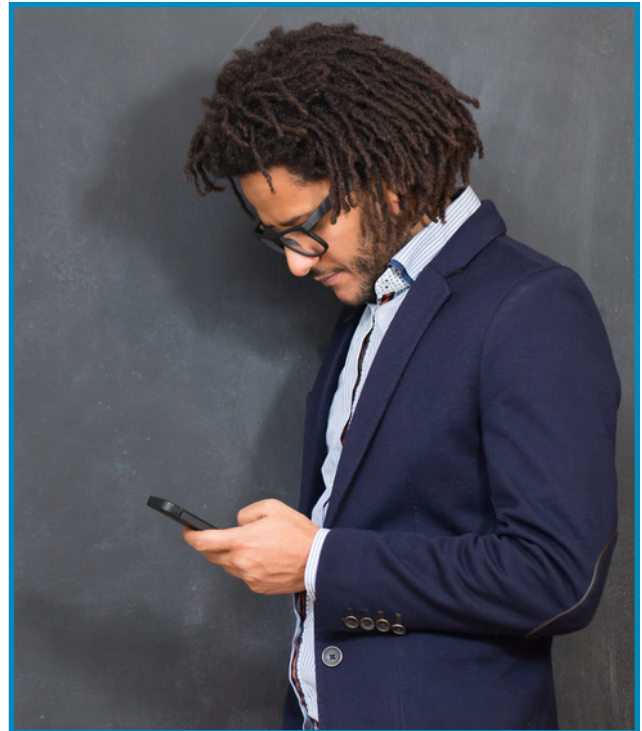


## THE DECLINE OF POSTURE

Think about what you did before getting behind your computer to read this report? I would make a large bet that you would answer this question with “I was on my phone”. Or maybe you are reading this report ON YOUR CELL PHONE.

We live in a society that not only uses smart phones but also flat-out WORSHIPS the smart phone. I mean we all bow our heads to use the phone right?

If you aren't convinced that every civilized society is a SLAVE to the smart phone, look at these two statistics:



- Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, revealed at the Apple Watch Conference on March 9, 2015 that Apple had sold a total of 700 million iPhones to date. Mind you that Apple released its first iPhone in 2007...
- According to a 2015 Gallup Panel survey, 81% of smartphone owners keep their smartphones near them almost all the time during their waking hours. Within the same survey nearly 52% of the smartphone owners check their phone a few times an hour or more!

In the neutral posture, head directly over top the spine; the head feels nearly weightless, because the body is perfectly balanced. When our body, and in

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particular our spine, is positioned in this ‘texting’ posture (also known as Forward Head Posture) something dangerous happens.

Every inch that the head moves forward, it feels as if its weight has doubled and this added weight puts a harmful amount of unnecessary pressure and unwanted stress on the spine.

The muscles of the neck, shoulders and upper back are forced to work to support the head in this position. The resulting strain on your muscles is exhausting and once these muscles become exhausted is when we are more prone to back pain and injury.

Now to be fair we can’t just blame smart phones for screwing up your posture. Often overlooked but yet might have a larger role in how your posture is are the environmental conditions that you are placed in each and everyday, more specifically your job and how you sleep at night.

If you are one of the many who sit on your butt for a majority of the workday consider yourself posture problem prone. One major detriment to long periods of sitting is the alarming effect on your flexibility, mobility, and joint health and all of this is brought on by gravity and involuntary muscle shortening.



And not only that but also a progressive tightening of the hip muscles from the

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lack of movement throughout the day as well as having poor ergonomics and sitting positions at work. These are all detrimental to the health of your spine and ultimately your entire body.

Now let's say that you don't have the privilege of sitting all day and are constantly on the go without ever taking a break. I myself don't sit much since I'm constantly on the training floor with clients and athletes. And let me be the first person to tell you that standing can be just as exhausting as sitting all day.

Whatever situation you are in we all become how we live. We fill the mold in which we are placed. We get more and more familiar with being 'comfortable' (and I use this word loosely), and the more and more inactive we are the more comfortable we become.

Our posture becomes set in tension and before we know it we can no longer control our movement.

The body responds and adapts and reacts to everything that's happened to us in our lives i.e. trauma, injury, stress, being sedentary, and training methods. Our posture is a sum of all that has been added or built up as our "set" -- as in "set in our ways" -- This set can be seen as a pattern of muscular and neurological tension as well as a psychological state.

Yes, certain events are unavoidable like a car accident or a birth abnormality but given that we have the control over our physical body is something that should never be neglected, especially if it affects our health.

In other words, we all should be taking care of our body and doing all we can to stay away from living a sedentary lifestyle.



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As mentioned earlier, our body was built to move and a lack of exercise (movement) will cause the low back to become stiff. Stiffness is usually worse in the morning while muscles can remain tight, weak, and sore for the remainder of the day. The discomfort and lack of mobility, deters and discourages us from wanting to exercise these very same muscle groups that are affected.

Sometimes, we avoid exercise as a measure to protect us from further discomfort and believe that increased rest is needed to recover or needed to feel better.

However, too much rest is also known to slow down our recovery efforts. It is really from lack of exercise that leads to reduced flexibility, mobility and endurance. This is a very difficult cycle and habit to break.

And what could possibly be harder to break is a training program or workout routine, even though it might seem correct in the logic but in reality it's causing more bad than good.

The three most common postural problems I encounter as a Strength Coach and Movement Specialist is anterior pelvic tilt, upper crossed syndrome, and forward head posture.

These deadly body positions are generally attributed to chronic use of technology and the 'desk-job' lifestyle. When it comes to training and how it's related to our spine, proper posture relies on 3 crucial components: a strong posterior chain, a mobile trunk, and an open front-side.



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It's essential to be aware of and able to correct muscle imbalance patterns, as they often lead to poor exercise technique, compensation patterns, and injuries.

Exercises like sit-ups and crunches do the latter of this in an already closed off front, pulling the shoulders forward not allowing the spine to move freely as it's designed to do.



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## 3 PLANES OF MOTION

Let's talk about the core for a little bit. Your core is so much more than just your abs. Your core is a complex series of muscles, extending far beyond your belly, including everything besides your arms and legs. It is incorporated in almost every movement of the human body.

The core has 3-D depth and should have functional movement in three planes of motion: the sagittal plane, coronal plane, and the transverse plane.

The sagittal plane divides the body into left and right. When we move along this plane, we are using the strength of our muscles to move parts of the body forward or backward. Extension and flexion happen along the sagittal plane. This means most running, biking, rowing, and lifting movements make use of this plane.

The coronal plane divides the body into front and back. When we move along this plane, we are moving toward or away from the midline. Adduction and abduction are movements along this plane. Many of our daily movements and exercises involve very little abduction. We tend to stay fairly neatly hugged in toward the middle.

The transverse (or horizontal) plane divides the body into top and bottom, but it is a little less straightforward. Any time we rotate a joint we are moving along the



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transverse plane. In daily life, this is the action we do least frequently, particularly with the large joints in the hips, shoulders, and spine.

Your core most often acts as a stabilizer and force transfer center rather than a prime mover. Yet consistently people focus on training their core as a prime mover and in isolation. This would be doing crunches or back extensions versus functional movements like deadlifts, overhead squats and pushups, among many other functional closed chain exercises.



And by incorrectly training you are not only missing out on a major function of the core, but also better strength gains, more efficient movement and longevity of your spine.

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## WHY POSTURE MATTERS

I think I've painted a clear enough picture about posture and what it is and what it's responsible for but maybe you're still unsure why all this matters.

### Longevity of Life

A study from 2004 was published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society [1] has confirmed what many of us have known all along—that posture is directly related to longevity of life.



The study followed 1,353 patients for an average of 4.2 years. It confirmed, at least theoretically, what many chiropractors and physical therapists have been saying for years: poor posture, including forward head posture, slumped shoulders, and excessive rounding in the mid-back, is a major cause of decreased lifespan.

Furthermore, according to the United Chiropractic Association (UCA), which has around 600 members across the UK, states that forward-leaning posture increases the risk of an early death in elderly people and there are fears that younger people might be knocking time off their lives thanks to technology.

The UCA points out that elderly people with even a small degree of hyperkyphosis (excessive rounded back) have a 1.44 times greater risk of mortality than those without. This is a similar figure to increased risk of death with

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those who are considered obese.

## Athletic Performance

You should know by now that good posture appears to promote efficient movement, balance and control. At the same time it is the ability for efficient movement that promotes good posture. Did you catch that?

**Efficient movement = good posture and good posture = efficient movement.**



Good posture is an indication of poise and consequently poor posture is a sign of lost poise.

A poised athlete will almost always move freely with minimal effort and is not pulled out of shape or contorted in the way they move by excessive muscle tension or structure restriction. The athlete without poise will use inappropriate muscle action in their given sport and allows the risk of injury to enter at an extremely high probability.

## Sexual Performance

I bet you never thought that your posture would affect your sex life. It's obvious the more active you are, the healthier you look and feel. But what does this have to do with poor posture?

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There's a good chance that you care about your sex life, as you should. Sex is a wonderful thing and who wouldn't want to enjoy it to its max. But the truth is for men AND women, having poor posture will affect your performance in bed.

Any type of pain or limitation to your movement that involves your middle and lower back as well as your hips or abdominals can cause difficulty in certain movements of the hips as well as shallow breathing.

Not only does pain restrict our sexual performance but also the body responds to pain as a threat and quickly moves from a state of pleasure to a state of panic.

## **Sex and panic do not go together.**

And to make it even worse having an immobile spine will cause tight hips and by having this tightness, your hips will become fixed in a forward thrust position causing your pelvis and leg(s) to rotate. This isn't a good thing.

This forward tilt will cause your hip socket to become compressed leading to pulling and shifting of joints, tendons, and muscles pulling on your lower back. This pulling on the lower back WILL decrease blood flow and circulation as well as delayed nerve response to the hips.

And having decreased blood flow... well... you get it.

## **Risk of Diabetes and Heart Disease**

A panel of English researchers cross-referenced sitting time with health outcomes and they found that those people who sat the most more than doubled

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their risk of developing diabetes and had a 147 % increase in their risk for cardiovascular disease, even if they exercised and were considered healthy.

## Intestinal and Lung Function

Your stomach and intestines rely on movements known as peristaltic movements to push food through your intestines. Poor posture can affect peristaltic function, meaning your gastrointestinal system may not function as effectively. This can lead to constipation, hemorrhoids, polyps, pain, cramping, and so on.



Hunching forward too much can affect your lung capacity by as much as 30%, according to Dr. Rene Cailliet, former director of University of Southern California's Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

When your lungs do not perform as well, your tissues, including your heart and brain, do not receive as much oxygenated blood. This can lead to shortness of breath, clouded thinking, and vascular disease.



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## HOW TO FIX YOUR POSTURE – 3 SIMPLE STRATEGIES

### 1) An Active Lifestyle is a Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy active lifestyle is considered to be a lifestyle that includes a healthy diet and a regular exercise plan 7 days of the week with little deviation away from the daily routine.

One way to get a healthy active lifestyle is to start with a healthy diet. Try eliminating some of the unhealthiest foods from the diet, or making some substitutions.

For instance, if you have a soda or two every day, that could be replaced with water or tea. A regular snack of chips or cookies might be replaced with whole-grain fruit or nuts. Many people also choose to take a daily multivitamin to make up for any deficiencies in their diet.

It's also best to eat a diet made up of a lot of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein such as chicken or fish. Be creative while cooking and try to make



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new recipes with healthy ingredients, you'll be surprised at what tasty meals you can make by using healthy ingredients.

Again, be sure to drink enough water every day and try to quit unhealthy habits such as eating sugary foods, smoking or excessive drinking.



The second part of a healthy active lifestyle is having a regular exercise routine. This routine doesn't have to be anything crazy or extreme. It can be going for a daily walk or jog, working out at a gym, doing some regular weight lifting or even gardening. These and other similar activities are an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

There are other ways to incorporate exercise into everyday life; for instance, take the stairs instead of the elevator, park further away from the door when driving somewhere and take a short break from work to go for a walk.

Leading a healthy lifestyle is a great way to protect and improve your posture. Not only that but you can also lose weight, increase muscle mass and strength as well as strengthen your bones to keep the body moving as it should.

## 2) Ergonomics (Work & Home)

This topic can get confusing but if you remember these simple tips you'll be one step ahead of falling into the poor posture trap at work.

While sitting in an office chair, take advantage of the chair's features. Sit up

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straight and align the ears, shoulders, and hips in one vertical line. Any prolonged sitting position, even a good one, can be tiring.

Shifting forward to the edge of the seat with a straight back can alternate with sitting back against the support of the office chair to ease the work of back muscles.

Also supportive ergonomic “props” can help to take the strain and load off of the spine. Ergonomic office chairs or chairs with an adjustable back support are great and surprisingly comfortable.

Other helpful items like footrests, portable lumbar back supports or even a towel or small pillow can be used while sitting in an office chair, on soft furniture and while driving.

If you are on your feet most of the day either standing or walking, consider using a purse, bag, backpack or briefcase that is designed to minimize back strain and this can influence good posture throughout your day.

Last on ergonomics, many people never consider your eyes to have an intricate role in our posture while at work. By having proper and up to date corrective eyewear as well as positioning computer screens or work stations to your natural, resting eye position can help you avoid leaning too much or straining the neck too far with the head tilted forward.

### 3) Head Posture

Despite what you may have heard in the movie Jerry McGuire, the human head does not weigh 8 lbs. The average human head weighs 10 to 12 pounds.

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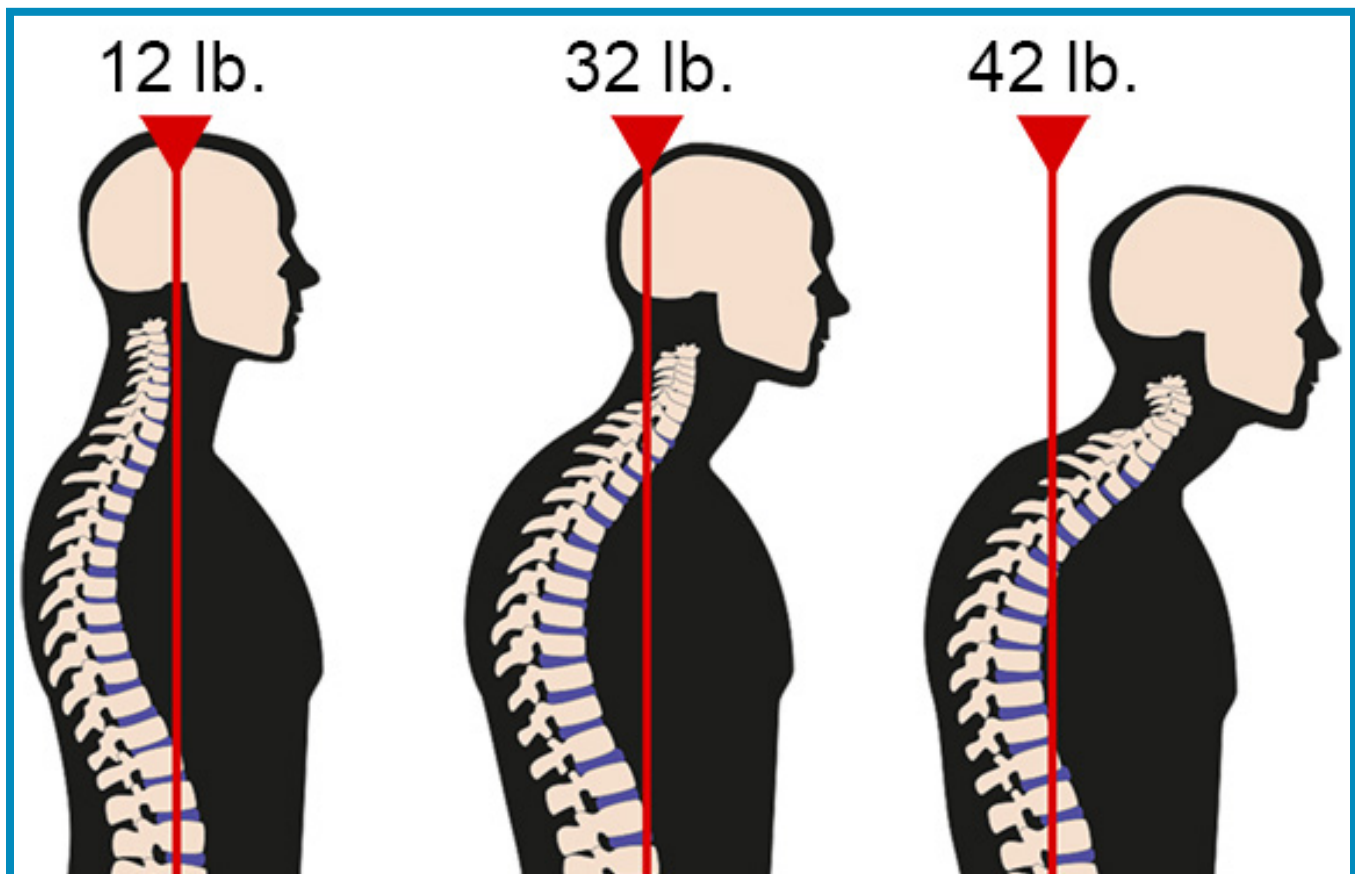


When your head sits perfectly upon your neck and shoulders, the body naturally adapts to holding this weight.

But if your head is constantly pulled forward from texting a lot or sitting at a computer all day, the weight of your head pulls on your neck and puts pressure on your spine.

When your head is pulled forward the additional pressure on your neck, shoulders and back rises dramatically causing serious tissue damage.

**In fact, every inch your head is thrust forward from its natural position adds another 10 lbs of stress & pressure on the neck, shoulders, back and spine.**



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## Fix the #1 Muscle That Makes You Look 10-Years Older Than You Actually Are

It's why you may have developed that ugly 'hump' below your neck; to combat the stress of holding your head up, the body's reaction has been to build-up bone and fat tissue to compensate and protect the spine at the C7 vertebrae.

Forward head posture doesn't just leave you looking awkward and older than you really are it also causes much deeper, serious problems including:

- **Constant fatigue and lack of energy**
- Pain in your neck, shoulders or upper, lower and middle back
- **Permanent damage to your joints, muscles & ligaments**
- Headaches and migraines
- **Poor sleep or insomnia**
- Arthritis
- **Impaired athletic performance**
- Loss of height by 2 inches
- **Looking 10 lbs fatter than you actually are**
- Affects your hormonal health
- **Noisy mouth breathing, snoring & sleep apnea**
- Early degeneration of your spine
- **Pinched and trapped nerves**
- Decreased range of motion
- **Lack of confidence**
- Blood Flow to the Brain
- **Asthma**
- Decreased lung capacity by up to 30%
- **Harmful affects to vision and hearing**
- Jaw pain and sinus issues

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- **Dizziness, vertigo and balance issues**
- **Burdens your digestive system**

If you've suffered any of these without realizing the root problem was Forward Head Posture also known as Text Neck, you're in luck because you can fix the issue with....

## [10 Simple Exercises to Restore Balance and Eliminate Neck and Back Pain](#)



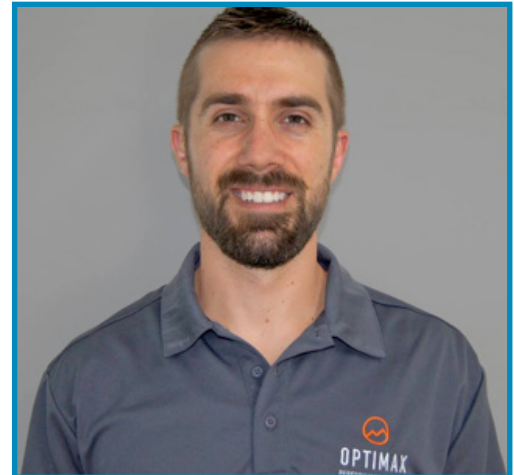
[1] Deborah M. Kado, MD; Ms. Mei-Hua Huang; DrPH; Arun S. Karlamangla, MD, PhD; Elizabeth Barrett-Connor, MD and Gail A. Greendale, MD. Hyperkyphotic Posture Predicts Mortality in Older Community-Dwelling Men and Women: A Prospective Study Journal of the American Geriatrics Society Volume 52 Issue 10, October 2004, Page 1662

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Klepacki has over 15 years of experience and education in the fitness and athletic world. He holds a Master's Degree in Exercise Science and holds numerous highly recognized certifications that have set his expertise and training above most others. Brian has learned that in order for you to achieve your max performance, a multitude of training regimes must be implemented to stimulate all systems of the body.



As a competitive triathlete and a Strength & Conditioning Specialist, Brian knows how crucial it is to sort through fact and fiction when it comes to athletic training and human performance. His philosophy is simple, PURPOSE OVER PREFERENCE. He is not about those big box cookie cutter programs and he doesn't prescribe a random workout that has no purpose. His logic is specific. His training has a purpose.

Brian currently resides in St. Petersburg, FL with his wife and their two boys. He is the Owner of Optimax Performance Training, Consults as the Core Training Advisor for CriticalBench.com and is the creator of the wildly popular [Crunchless Core program](#).

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