



DR. SWEIGARD (LEFT) AND PUPILS DEMONSTRATE A FLEXIBILITY TEST POSITION. NOTE THAT DR. SWEIGARD'S BACK SHOWS LONG SMOOTH CURVE AS BODY RESTS ON HEELS



DR. SWEIGARD EXPLAINS BODY MECHANICS TO ONE OF HER PUPILS

SWEIGARD SYSTEM CORRECTS POSTURE BY REST

Posture is interesting to physical educators because it gives the quickest indication of what is right or wrong with the habits of a body's mechanics. For Lulu E. Sweigard, physical education instructor at New York University, posture is even more revealing because she has taken 2,000 X-ray pictures and 35,000 exact measurements of the body conformations of 500 subjects. She is therefore able to say that almost all human bodies suffer from bad muscle habits that result in curved spines, unequal length of legs, a slanted pelvis and round shoulders. To improve posture Dr. Sweigard recommends no course of exercises but a system of mental imagery and "constructive rest."

Ordinary exercise only confirms the bad neuromuscular habits that twist the torso out of alignment, because those habits are reflexes, not subject to conscious control. Improved reflexes can be established, according to Dr. Sweigard, only if the subject can be made to grasp a mental image of correct, symmetrical adjustment of the skeleton, which in turn will set up a new pattern of unconscious neuromuscular reflex action. This is achieved first in the positions of constructive rest, beginning with the basic position shown below at right. With the torso properly and symmetrically integrated, the body can then be habituated to its re-adjustment in a series of body movements, some of which are shown on the next page.

EXTENDED LEGS ARCH BACK OFF TABLE STRAINING TRUNK AND LEG MUSCLES



CONSTRUCTIVE REST POSITION EASES BACK AGAINST TABLE AND REDUCES STRAIN



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Constructive rest position encourages relaxation of extremities and integration of component parts of trunk.



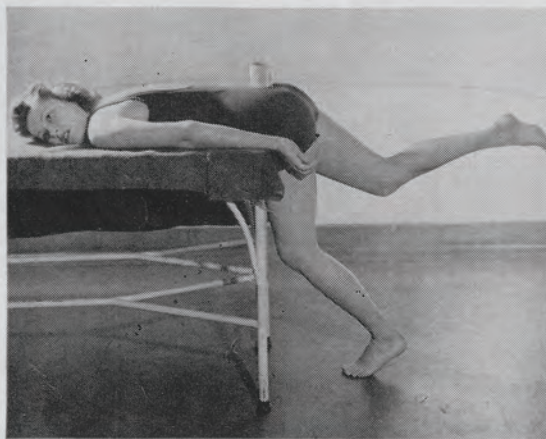
With trunk in line, model begins swing to sitting position. This requires hard work by abdominal muscles.



Nearly upright, spinal alignment should be maintained. This is difficult move from constructive rest position.



Face down on table, subject first concentrates on symmetrical alignment of torso. Beaker serves as spirit level.



Leg is raised without distorting alignment of spine and without twisting pelvis from horizontal, as beaker shows.



From sitting position, subject first adjusts torso into symmetrical alignment, with spine straight, swings forward.



Near success, subject is about to pick up paper in teeth. Paper is placed a forearm's length in front of knee line.



Flexibility test shows up incorrect posture alignment in arched back. Subject sits on heels, then swings forward.



Improved posture is indicated in straighter line of back. Subject must relax extremities, concentrate on the torso.



Bad and improved posture is shown above and below. In good posture the trunk and legs are vertical.