

# Get in Touch with Your Core

According to Stephanie Davies, founder of SD Rehab in Chicago ([www.sdrehab.com](http://www.sdrehab.com)), good posture should be effortless.

“Our body is meant to stack the bones of the spine,” says Davies, who recommends learning the body’s “sensory cues” to find proper alignment. “Once you find your



relationship to gravity, it becomes easier to carry to head over the bowl of the pelvis because you’ve learned to feel yourself in space.”

## Develop Your Sensory Cues

**Standing:** Stand flat against a wall (or lie on your back). Don’t plaster yourself, just notice which body parts resist. Not only are they telling you where you are out of balance but daily practice with this exercise will help you properly use the forces of gravity to stand tall.

**Sitting:** Here’s one that can be done at your desk. Bite down on the middle knuckle of your index finger. Create opposition by pulling the finger forward while pulling back on your upper cervical and skull. That’s what proper alignment should feel like, both elongated up and grounded.

## Straighten Out Your Act

**Swopper:** Swap out your desk chair with one of these. The seat is a dynamic surface, moving from front to back and side to side. This allows your core muscles to be in the constant

balance-reaction mode, allowing you to find, engage and adjust your center with each movement. [www.workchairs.com](http://www.workchairs.com)

**Elastic Resistance Bands:** For proper back alignment, Davies recommends “funneling,” which develops core muscles and spinal alignment. Wrap the band around your ribcage, palms up and elbows bent and out. Exhale as you pull and tighten the band. Hold and notice how the action elongates and centers your spine like an “internal corset.” [www.ptmart.com](http://www.ptmart.com)

## Other Techniques

**Bar Method:** The newest in core-strengthening and stretching techniques, this method takes its name from the ballet barre, which is used as a balancing prop, and combines yoga, Pilates, and ballet. Each core muscle is targeted and worked with “until they tremble,” according to founder Burr Leonard. For the advanced and the intrepid. Class locations: [www.barmethod.com/locations.htm](http://www.barmethod.com/locations.htm)