

# Postural Restoration®: Creating Balance in an Asymmetrical Body



Sangini Rane teaching a client how to balance their body with a Postural Restoration exercise.

By Sangini, Rane, PT, PRC

Yes, the human body is asymmetrical, although you may not realize it just looking at it from the outside. After all, you have two ears, two arms and two legs.

In spite of this outward apparent symmetry, there is an inherent internal organ asymmetry from having a large liver on the right side and a smaller heart on the left. In addition, our respiratory system is also designed asymmetrically, with the right diaphragm being more dominant and pulling the lower spine to the right. Bottom-line, what happens is that our lower body gets oriented to the right and to offset this pull, our upper half gets rotated towards the left. That's why more often than not, we see left shoulders slightly higher than the right and the upper ribs on the right rotated (twisted) downwards, with the ribs on the left rotated upwards. The result? A lot of torque or a tug of war going on in the body, creating a potential imbalance of forces that can wreak havoc and cause movement dysfunction and pain as a result.

Now one question you may have is: if we all (normal humans that is) have this asymmetry, why doesn't everyone not have pain? Well, as long as we can keep this asymmetry in check by not letting it get out of hand, things are fine. Problems arise when the asymmetry or torque gets out of control and forces go in one direction all the time, creating an even bigger imbalance. The result? Muscle and joint strain, inflammation, pain, and impaired movement patterns that can affect not only day-to-day activities, but athletic performance as well.

Our daily activities and lifestyle actually enhance this asymmetry. How? We are always reaching with our right hand (in a right-handed world) and thus rotating our torso to the left all

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the time; standing on the right leg most of the time; sitting on the right hip more than the left, chewing on one side more than the other and so on. We play a lot of sports that demand use of one side more than the other. And yet, when we exercise we do the exercises symmetrically on each side; ten repetitions on one side and the exact ten repetitions on the other side.

Why? Because we think that we will get lopsided if we don't—when the exact opposite is true: we get more lopsided because we exercise this way. What we don't realize is the fact that with the natural asymmetry of the body, muscle length and position on one side of the body is not the same as on the other side. This means that certain muscles on one side of the body are positioned such that they cannot work as well as on the other side because they are long and weak. For example, with the pelvis on the left rotated and tilted to the right in the normal “asymmetrical pattern,” the left hamstring gets long and weak. It tends to feel “tight,” however, because it is on stretch, as its attachment site on the top has moved up. So if we now stretch this muscle thinking that it is tight, it only gets longer and weaker as a result.

## ADDRESSING ASYMMETRY

Postural Restoration® trained therapists like us (Sangini Rane, PT, and Carol Ames, PTA) think outside the box and work and train muscles differently than most traditional therapists because we recognize that the right and left sides of the body are different. The muscle over-activity on the right side of the body can be addressed with exercise techniques that use breathing techniques and proper positioning of the diaphragm to minimize compensation strategies used to negotiate this right dominant pattern. Programs and strategies are offered to inhibit unwanted patterns and properly position all the muscles on both sides of the body. Once balanced muscle activity is restored, specific training and integration of activities help balance respiratory dynamics, stabilize optimal pelvic and ribcage position, and retrain appropriate patterns. There is no cookie-cutter exercise program doing the same set of exercise on the left as on the right; nor doing traditional stretching exercises that will only increase the asymmetry and throw the body more out of balance.

This innovative approach is what makes us different and our treatments more effective. I had a patient last week who said:

*“I want you to know that this is the first time that I have had so much improvement in a short time, it's amazing that an exercise I am doing with my hip [pelvis] is making my right neck pain and tension go away immediately. I've had PT before and it would get me more sore and the pain kept coming back. This is so different and effective and makes more sense.”* h&h

*Sangini Rane, PT, PRC, has been a physical therapist for 29 years and has been utilizing the science of Postural Restoration® since 2002 with profound results. Because of her dedication to achieve exceptional and successful outcomes where other traditional methods have failed, she earned the designation of Postural Restoration Certified in 2008. Contact her or Carol Ames, PTA, at Apex PT Postural Restoration Center, 1071 Pemberton Hill Road, Suite 101, Apex, NC 27502 or 35 Thompson Street, Suite 102, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Telephone: (919) 889-3126; apexptprc@gmail.com; www.apexptposturalrestorationcenter.com.*