

Observational Assessments

One of the most powerful instructional strategies that can be used by a GFI is to observe participants while they are performing a movement and then provide feedback based on those observations. Each participant's posture, exercise form and technique, and tolerance to fatigue should be monitored by the GFI throughout the class.

POSTURE AND MOVEMENT

A GFI should be able to recognize the important characteristics associated with proper spinal alignment and good overall posture. The following points represent what to look for when assessing a participant's standing posture.

Sagittal view (Figure a):

- The head should be suspended (not pushed back or dropped forward) with the ears in line with the shoulders, shoulders over hips, hips over knees, and knees over ankles.

- Participants must maintain the three natural curves of the spine. A decrease or increase in the spinal curvature changes the amount of compression the spine can withstand. The hips can be tucked slightly, particularly for individuals with exaggerated lumbar lordosis, women who are pregnant, and participants with large, protruding abdominal areas.

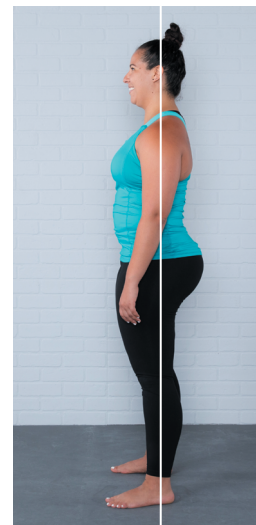
- The knees should be unlocked or soft. Hyperextended knees shift the pelvis, contributing to an increased low-back curve and back strain, along with decreased blood flow to and from the legs.

Frontal views (anterior and posterior) (Figures b and c):

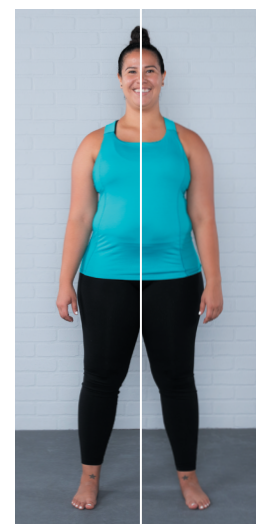
- The feet should be shoulder-width apart with the weight evenly distributed. Excessive foot pronation or supination could lead to musculoskeletal injuries if a participant performs high volumes of exercise with poor foot mechanics. Any individual who complains of joint pain in the ankles, knees, hips, or back should consult their healthcare provider, especially if they exhibit high arches (excessive supination) or flat feet (excessive pronation).

- There should be overall symmetry between the right and left sides of the body with no visible lateral shifting or leaning to one side.

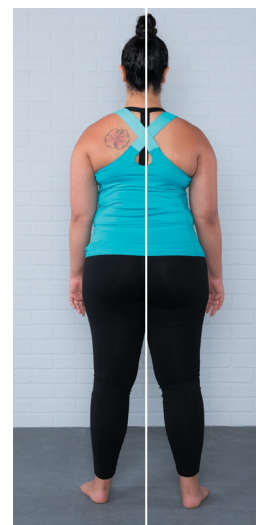
Continued on the next page



a. Sagittal plane view



b. Frontal plane view (anterior)



c. Frontal plane view (posterior)

- The arms should hang with equal space between each arm and the torso and the hands should hang such that only the thumbs and index fingers are visible (i.e., no knuckles should be visible from the frontal plane anterior view). Hands that hang with the knuckles facing forward indicate an imbalance of the muscles of the shoulder and/or forearm.

- The kneecaps (patellae) should be oriented forward without deviation inward or outward (internal or external rotation, respectively). A patella that appears rotated inward or outward is an indication of a potential muscular imbalance or structural deviation of the hips and/or foot/ankle complex.
