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## Posture and Undergarments

Anita Andrews

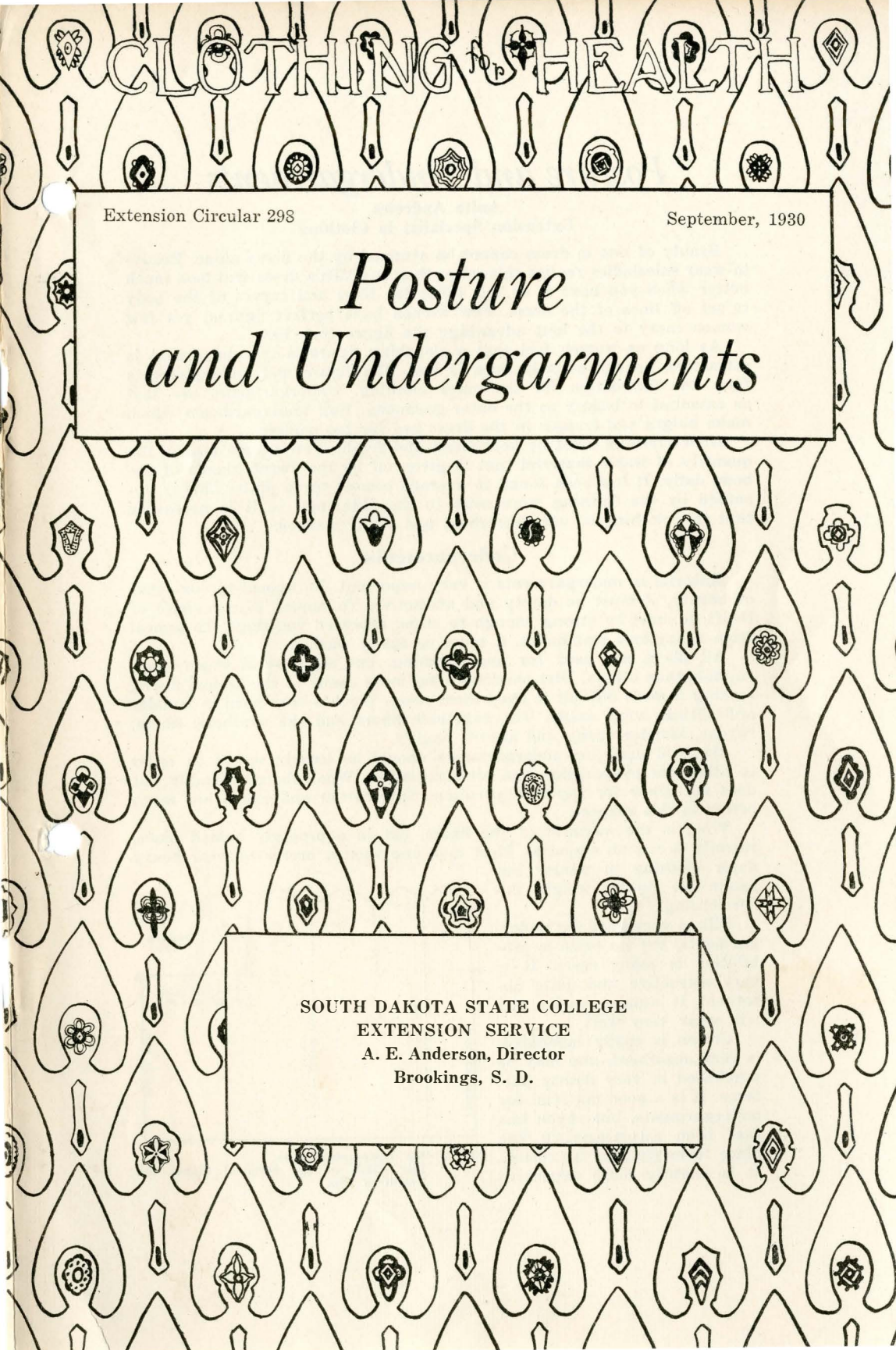
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# *Posture and Undergarments*

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE  
EXTENSION SERVICE  
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# Posture and Undergarments

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Beauty of line in dress cannot be attained by the dress alone. Ready-to-wear salesladies realize this when they say "This dress will look much better when you have it on." It takes the lines and curves of the body to set off lines of the dress. Few women have perfect figures; yet few women carry to the best advantage the figure they have.

As long as women feel that a slouching figure is the shape that is attractive, beauty in body lines is lost. The figure and undergarments form the foundation for the outer clothing. Undergarments are just as essential to beauty as the outer garments. Full undergarments which make bulges and creases in the dress are far too common.

Underclothing must be kept clean and fresh. Few people realize the quantity of waste material that is given off by the sweat glands of the body daily. It has been found to average almost three pints. This is absorbed by the clothing worn next to the skin, and so it is necessary that this clothing be very absorbent and easily washed.

## Undergarments

Material in undergarments is very important. To appeal to our sense of beauty, it must be dainty and attractive. To appeal to our sense of thrift, it must be strong enough to stand repeated washings. To appeal from a hygienic standpoint, it must be easily washed.

All fibers are used for underclothing, but some seem much more suitable than others. Dirt particles cling more easily to the animal fibers, making it more difficult to keep them clean. Wool is very hard to launder and shrinks very easily. The vegetable fibers and the synthetic fibers, rayons, launder easily and absorb readily.

Material used for undergarments should be loosely woven in order to allow for evaporation and air circulation. Wool absorbs readily but does not allow for rapid evaporation. Silk, cotton and rayon are much better in this respect.

Wool is the warmest of the fibers, but in a properly heated place, warmth is not an essential. Most men and women prefer to wear heavy outer clothing in winter but retain the lighter weight underclothing.

Silk is very good for undergarments, but its price is prohibitive in many cases. It is very attractive and quite absorbent. It launders easily, and will wear very well.

Cotton is easily laundered, is very absorbent, and may be purchased in very dainty patterns. It is a good material for undergarments, but rayon has fast been supplanting the place formerly held by cotton. It is slightly more expensive

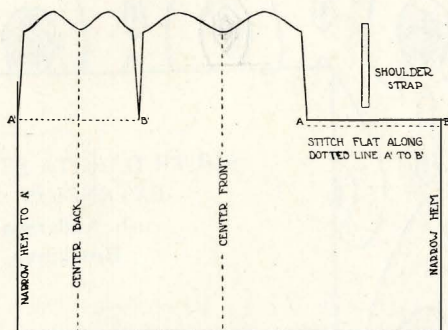


Fig. 1—The wrap-around slip.  
The width of the material makes the length of slip.

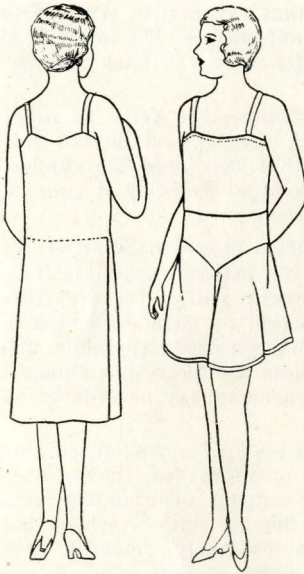


Fig. 2—Smooth fitting undergarments give a trim appearance.  
Left—The wrap-around slip.  
Right—Step-ins with wide girdle.

but has some qualities in its favor over cotton and silk.

Rayons are becoming more and more useful everyday. Steady improvements have been made until fibers, almost like silk in every way, have been produced. Just recently has come the rayon manufacturers' stamp of quality. There is inferior rayon as well as other products but only garments made of rayon which meets the standard can be trademarked with the quality stamp. This is a protection to the purchaser and also to the manufacturer. Inferior quality rayon does not wear well, but good quality rayon wears very well for undergarments. Rayon in a knitted garment probably gives the best satisfaction. The rayon fiber lacks elasticity and the elasticity of the knitted weave helps a great deal toward the wearing quality.

Too often silk and rayon undergarments are washed, dried at night in an inside room and never exposed to the air and sunlight. These garments as well as others should be put in air and light occasionally. It gives them a freshness which cannot be obtained otherwise.

### Fit and Style of Undergarments

Style changes as rapidly in undergarments as in outer clothing. Undergarments must fit smoothly. Bloomers or shorts should fit rather snugly, and the style with a band in front is probably the most desirable. Well fitted slips should be worn with all good dresses because they give not only protection but also a better fit to the garments. Slips protect the outer garments from the oil of the skin and fewer cleanings are required when they are worn. It is well to have a slip fit plainly without gathers. To allow ease in putting the garment on it may be snapped under the arms. Slips with fulness gathered at the hips are bulky and unattractive.

A slip should be made of some material that does not cling or have a tendency to wrap. Silk is the ideal slip material. For an inexpensive silk slip, pongee may be used.

The neckline of the slip may be rounded or a straight line with narrow shoulder straps. Many people have difficulty with the straps slipping off the shoulders. These people will find the round neckline slip much more comfortable.

### Brassieres and Corsets

A brassiere is worn by nearly every woman but in few cases are they properly fitted. A brassiere is designed to give support and it should not confine or bind. The straps should be placed so that they do not slip

off the shoulders. A brassiere should slightly flatten to give a trimness to the dress. Large busted women will find that a brassiere with darts coming down from the top will give the best appearance. The low busted woman will want a brassiere that will slightly raise the bust. A brassiere with darts at the lower edge will help.

Corsets have gone through a period of change, the same as other clothing. Young girls today are not wearing corsets and do not find them necessary. However, older women find that they need the support that such a garment can give. If a corset is fitted properly it can aid considerably in giving comfort by relieving strain.

It is very essential that this garment be fitted properly. Small stores do not have a person trained in corset fitting but often a corsetiere from

the company will be in the store for a period of days each season. Secure her services if possible, and then unless the figure has changed a new garment may be ordered by number.

True tests of a well fitted corset are comfort for the wearer, whether sitting or standing, and smooth flowing lines which do not give an obviously corseted look when a dress is worn.

A corselet is a good garment for the younger woman or girl who needs some support from a foundation garment. This combination of brassiere and corset gives a smooth line to the figure and a nice foundation for outer clothes.

A corset or corselet must be kept clean. Soak them for a few minutes in a mild soap solution and then scrub with a brush. It is necessary to have two garments. They will wear much better and with two garments a change is possible. Many women who are very careful otherwise will wear a soiled corset. It is safe to say that the life of the corset will be doubled if it is washed frequently.

For the corselet, straps which button on, so that a fresh pair may replace the soiled ones each day, will be found very convenient.

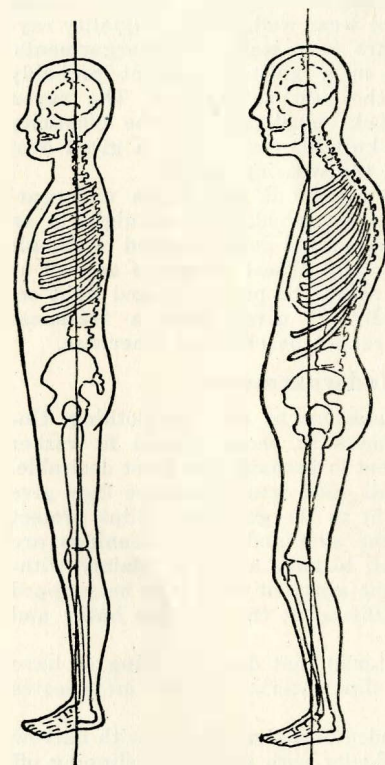


Fig. 3—Skeletal form of  
Left—a person with good posture.  
Right—a person with poor posture.

Study the undergarments you are wearing. Do they meet the requirements of comfort and good taste? Many irregularities in the figure can be hidden by proper foundation and undergarments, but most of them



may better be corrected than hidden. Good posture can do much to correct these defects.

### Posture

Correct posture is fundamental to the attractively clothed individual. A slouchy figure with a hollow chest is never as attractive as the figure with correct carriage. Right posture means a correct relationship of the various parts of the body to each other and to the body as a whole.

Proper posture lessens fatigue and makes the day's work much easier. It places the organs of the body in a position to do their work normally. The foundation of good posture, however, goes back to muscle tone. Muscles that have not been properly taken care of and have been allowed to sag, cannot give the support they were intended to give. One big fundamental of muscle tone, is not only use, but also correct food.

Wrong posture may be due to one of the following conditions:

1. Malnutrition and over fatigue.
2. Carelessness on the part of the person in not using certain muscles.
3. A wrong mental attitude. Walk as if you owned the world.
4. Ill-fitting clothing, i.e. clothing that continually pushes or pulls the body out of its right position.
5. Foot-arch trouble. It is hard for the individual with foot troubles to walk correctly.
6. Poor eyesight may cause undue bending forward of the head.

It is very difficult for a mature person who has allowed her body to remain in a wrong position to change that shape. However, persistent effort coupled with strong will power will bring wonders to the body which has been neglected.

The best time to develop a correct posture is, of course, in childhood. Teach the children what correct walking, standing, and sitting positions are. Height of the school desks is very important. Many children are forced to sit all day long in a seat that does not fit. This is very harmful to the growing body. Children need encouragement. Develop in them that desire for an attractive well-poised body. The child who is exceedingly tall for his age, the one that has grown so fast, is the one that particularly needs attention. Put posture pictures before him, and try to develop that desire for good posture. Besides appearance, the big thing is proper body functioning. The misplaced organs, caused by poor posture, may suffer for a long time without protest, but sooner or later the general health of the body will be injured, and its power to resist disease lowered.

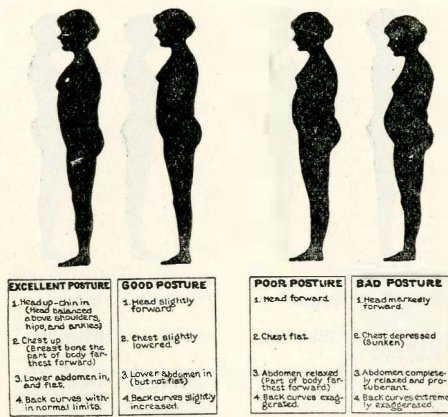


Fig. 4—Posture Standards.  
Stocky type women.

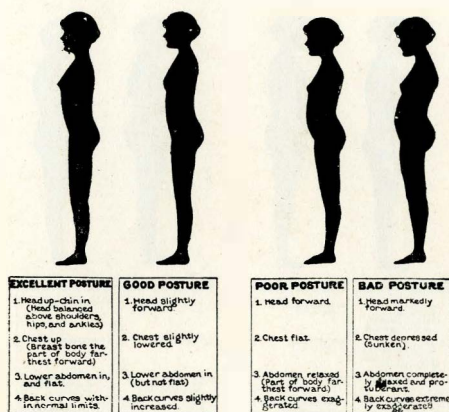


Fig. 5—Posture Standards  
Intermediate type women.

### Posture Exercises

Simple exercises will help to improve posture. Test your own posture by this little experiment:

1. Extend the arms at the sides to shoulder level with the palms down. Rise to tip-toes. Sink to the heels, keeping the arms extended. Slowly lower the arms. This position is correct posture. Possible errors may be failing to keep correct posture, or coming back with weight on the heels.

2. Another exercise which will put the body in right posture and at the same time give good exercise to

abdominal muscles is this: Stand with feet next the wall. The hips, shoulders, and head should touch the wall. Place the hands at the small of the back. Flatten the lower part of the back against the wall by pulling in the abdominal muscles. Attempt to flatten the back so that there is no space between hands and wall.

3. This exercise is of special benefit for the one with round shoulders. Secure correct posture by one of the above methods. Hold arms outstretched even with shoulders, palms down. Keeping this position, draw arms to the back. Repeat this several times.

4. Another very similar exercise and one that will also develop chest muscles and hold shoulders in place requires the same position, i.e. correct posture with outstretched arms. Rotate the arms in a small circle.

5. This exercise is to train for correct walking, and should be practiced in front of a mirror. Stand with the hands down at the sides, the feet straight, and the body swayed slightly forward. Bring the left foot forward, bend the knee and slightly flex the ankle. Touch the floor lightly with the heel and throw the weight immediately upon the ball of the foot. As the left foot takes the weight of the body bend the right knee and bring the weight upon the toes. Push off with the toes, lift with the muscles of the thigh, bring the right leg forward and come down with the heel first as was done with the left foot. The possible errors in this exercise may be putting the weight on the heels, turning the toes out, failing to keep the body in good posture, not bending the knees, or not lifting with the thigh muscles.

6. Even walking up and down stairs should be given attention. Keep correct posture, i.e. keeping the spine straight, while ascending, and put each foot flat on each step. A stooping position tires one very easily.

If care is taken in the selection of clothing for the person with poor posture, clothes may be found which will call attention away from these faults and the result is a more attractive figure. It is difficult for some of these people to buy ready-made clothing. They will find more satis-

faction in making their clothes. Patterns must be altered to take care of the shoulder that is higher than the other one or for the rounded shoulders and a hollow chest.

### Suggestions For Designs To Hide Effects of Poor Posture

Round shoulders and hollow chest:

Fullness in front, as jabots, etc.

Soft rolling collars.

Avoid plain necklines and very low cut lines.

Sway back:

Avoid princess line dresses.

Take care where belt line is placed.

Loose blouses are good.

Protruding abdomen:

Surplice fronts and attractive necklines will call attention away from defect.

Avoid center line decoration.

Posture which has been neglected too long takes time to restore. Many women spend more time and effort in trying to dress in a way that will cover posture defects than they do in trying to correct a poor posture. Select designs for the present which make you appear the best, but at the same time launch a campaign to improve posture. It must of necessity at first be a conscious problem. The rule for forming any habit will apply here.

1. Set forth with determination.
2. Allow no exceptions.

3. Practice it at every opportunity until it becomes fixed.

Many of these exercises may be practiced while the daily tasks of the household are being done. Attempt always to keep correct posture while walking from one place to another. Keep correct posture at all jobs which require standing and remember to walk correctly.

Is it worth your while to keep and improve your health?

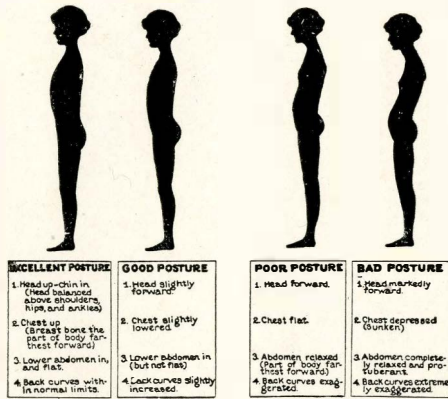


Fig. 6—Posture Standards  
Thin type women.

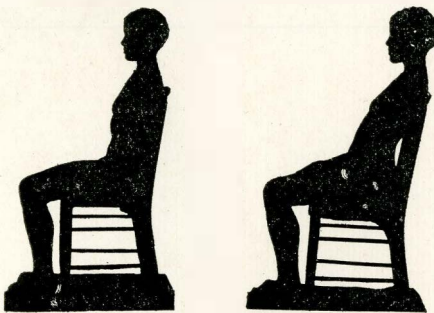


Fig. 7—a. Correct position.  
b. Incorrect position.



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