

OCCUPATIONAL PILATES:

PILATES FOR RESTAURANT INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

Within the hospitality industry, restaurant chefs are performing a tremendous amount of lifting, bending, reaching, twisting, shaking, scooping, and standing. All of which are oftentimes done in a repetitive motion, for long periods of time, on a daily basis. These job required movements are often the main cause for acute/chronic postural imbalances and spinal abnormalities, which can lead to pain and discomfort.

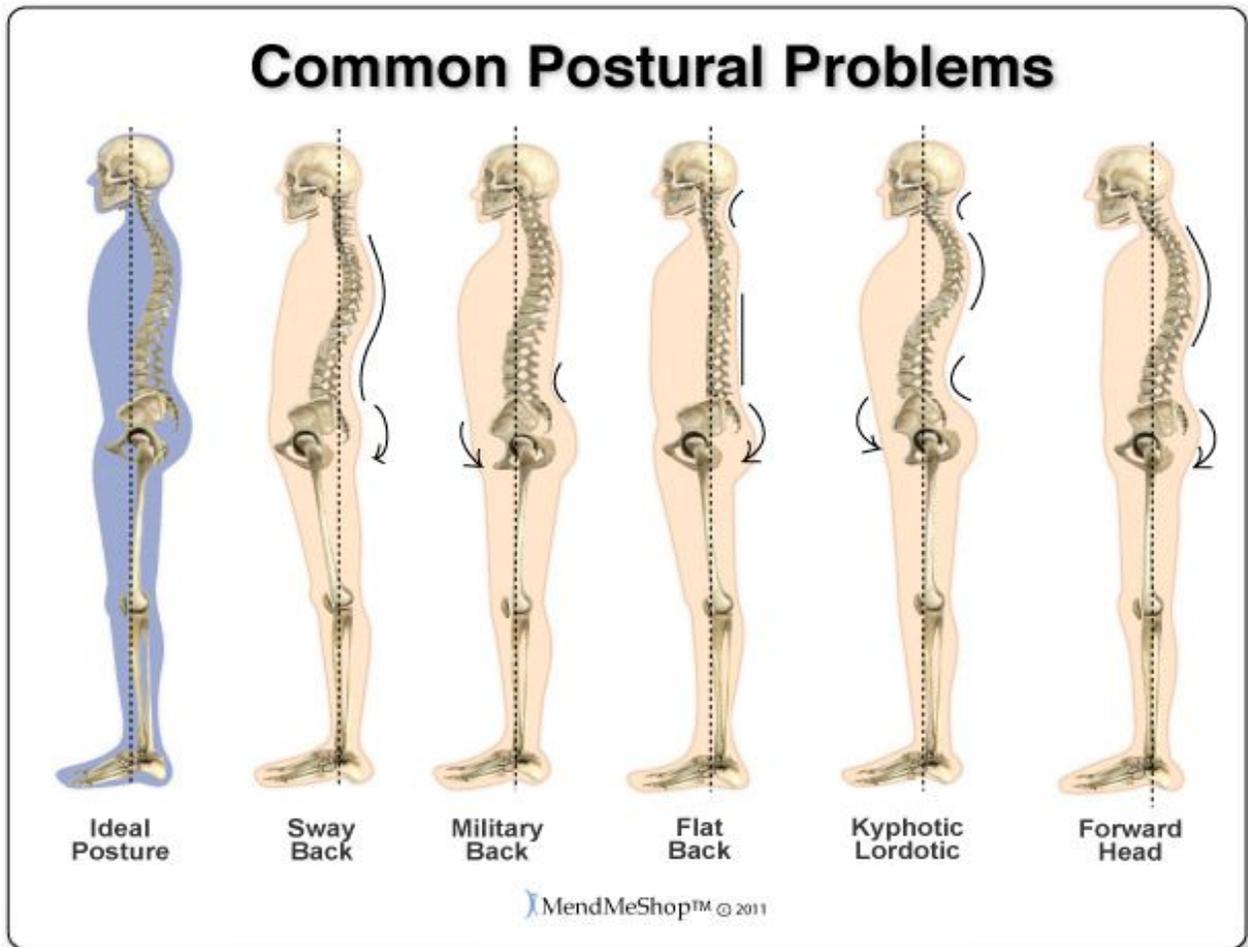
Physically speaking, this profession requires standing upright all day long on unforgivingly hard tiled floors, while leaning over surfaces that are not designed to accommodate the correct height for each individual. Repeatedly lifting heavy pots and pans from one surface to another. When these items are hot, naturally they tend to be carried further away from the body to prevent additional injuries. Repeatedly performing these scenarios can lead to strain of various parts of the body such as the back, neck, and shoulders. Which as a result can create spinal deviations and muscle imbalances.

It is not uncommon for chefs and cooks to put in 50-70 hours of work per week, averaging at 10-12 hour shifts each day, while oftentimes skipping their legally required breaks. The culinary world is very competitive and requires a lot of physical and mental strength of those who desire to be a part of it long-term. Physically and mentally, pilates can help these culinary professionals in many aspects such as improving their plumb line, strengthening postural muscles, correcting muscle imbalances, improving gait-cycle patterns, and relieving stress.

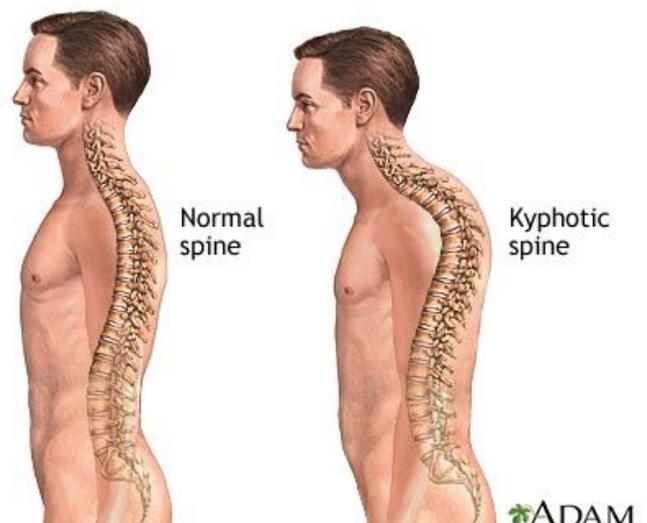
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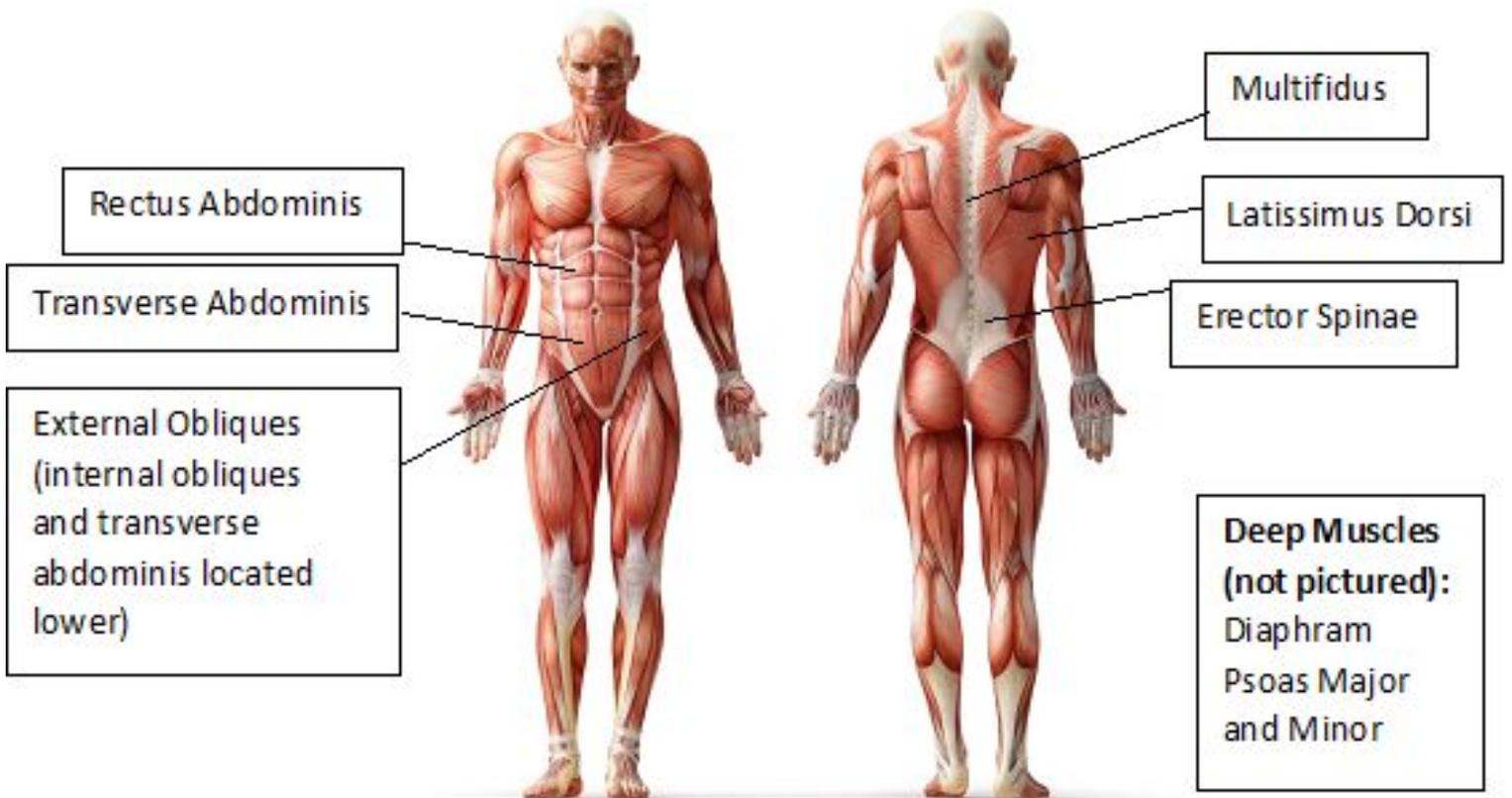
ANATOMICAL DESCRIPTION OF POSTURAL DEVIATIONS



For a chef, a vast portion of the work day is spent standing up while looking down. Either at a prep station, a grill, a sink, an expo table or various other places, the spine is repeatedly held in an unnatural position. Which can lead to postural deviations such as forward head or kyphosis.



Muscles Supporting Posture



(Image sourced from: <https://i.pinimg.com/736x/e8/ba/d3/e8bad3336f96727362d59ae0a02305eb-human-body-anatomy-male-muscle-anatomy.jpg>)

In order to realign the body as close as possible to an ideal posture, various muscles need to be strengthened. Primarily the core stabilizing muscles that are listed in the diagram above.

CASE STUDY

The subject of this case study is Josef Felts, he is 28 years old and does not have any physical limitations or rehabilitation treatments. Josef has been involved in the restaurant industry for nearly 10 years and relies heavily on his body to pursue his career. He has decided to incorporate weekly pilates sessions into his busy schedule to help strengthen and maintain a healthy functioning body for everyday use inside and outside of his Chef life. Currently his experience level is primarily focused within the fundamental level and we have recently incorporated a few intermediate exercises for an increased challenge. In the long term, his goals are to improve the plumb line as well as the gait cycle. In the short term, his goals are to gain more body awareness and increase postural muscle strength. Listed in the table below is the regime I have created using the BASI block system to help Josef meet his goals during each session.

BASI Block System	Exercise	Reasoning	Desired Goal
Warm Up (Mat)	-Pelvic Curl -Spine Twist Supine -Chest Lift -Chest Lift with Rotation	Warm up the body to prepare for more strenuous movements	Activation of the hamstrings and core muscles
Foot Work (Wunda Chair)	-Parallel heels -Parallel toes -V position toes -Open V heels -Open V toes -Calf Raises -Single Leg Heel -Single Leg Toes	Using the Wunda Chair for foot work to incorporate the abdominals & back extensors (postural muscles)	Strengthening the postural muscles, improving muscular imbalances for gait cycle purposes

Abdominal Work (Reformer)	-Hundred Prep -Hundred	Incorporating exercises that use an isometric contraction and co-contraction	Strengthening abdominal muscles to help build a stronger core to aid with everyday body mechanics
Hip Work (Cadillac)	-Frog -Circles Down//Circles Up -Bicycle//Bicycle Reverse -Walking	Practicing hip disassociation and pelvic lumbar stabilization	Stretching of the hamstrings, strengthening core muscles, and improving muscular imbalances in lower extremities
Spinal Articulation (Cadillac)	-Tower Prep	Incorporating spinal mobility to keep the spine healthy for everyday movements	Increasing spinal mobility, strengthening of abdominals/back extensors/hamstrings, stretching the back extensors/hamstrings
Stretches (Reformer)	-Standing Lunge	Opening up the hips and stretching the lower extremities	Preventing injuries and enhancing optimal performance for everyday use
Full Body Integration (beginner/intermediate) (Reformer)	(Knee Stretch Group) -Round Back -Flat Back	Practicing hip disassociation, trunk stability & pelvic stability	Strengthening the abdominals, back extensors for improved strength of postural muscles
Arm Work (Reformer)	(Arms Sitting Series) -Chest Expansion -Biceps -Rhomboids -Hug-a-tree -Salute	Using this series to recruit the postural muscles	Strengthening of the biceps, triceps, deltoids, rhomboids, obliques, abdominals, back extensors, hip flexors

Leg Work (Mat w/ Ankle Weights)	(Gluteals Kneeling Series) -Hip Extension Bent Knee -Hip Extension Straight Knee -Hip Abduction Bent Knee	Mobilizing the lower extremities while practicing trunk stabilization	Strengthening the glutes, hamstrings, hip flexors, hip extensors for optimization of everyday use
Lateral Flexion & Rotation (Wunda Chair)	-Side Stretch Kneeling	Mobilizing the spine while using the core to keep minimal movement of the pelvis	Stretching and strengthening the obliques, strengthening the postural muscles
Back Extension (Wunda Chair)	-Swan Basic	Practicing co-contraction of the abdominals and back extensors to move the body	Strengthening of the abdominals, back extensors & increased mobility of the spine while in flexion

CONCLUSION

After completing a total of 15 sessions, at 60 minutes per session, Josef has shown the most improvement in his overall well-being physically and mentally each day. He has also noticed small improvements in his postural muscle strength and sense of body awareness. Josef claims that learning to breathe laterally has “helped [him] to breathe more deeply and freely.” Pilates has also allowed him to feel more centered and less stressed throughout the work week. Although he still tends to experience acute foot

pain, he claims that the pain level has decreased, especially during the first few days after each session.

Josef understands how taxing his career choice has become on his body, but since he has started incorporating pilates into his life, he claims to feel less fatigued at the end of the work day, allowing him more energy for activities outside of work. He strives to continue practicing pilates long-term with hopes of lengthening the life-span of not only his body, but his career as well. Overall Josef's goals have not yet been 100% met, but he "feels the improvements and wants to continue practicing pilates as much as [he] can."

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