



SLOUCHING AT WORK COULD COST YOU YOUR JOB, REVEALS NEW RESEARCH FROM UK'S LEADING BODY LANGUAGE EXPERT

New research commissioned by Ergonomic specialist Fellowes and Body Language expert, Judi James, reveals that posture in the workplace can have a distinct impact on your career progression and success.

After years spent working with both employers and employees, Judi reveals why our body language in the workplace could make the difference being recognised for promotion or being at risk of losing our jobs.

“Highly successful people share little in the way of traits but one thing they do tend to have in common is a sense of energy and positivity in their posture. This often marks them out as an inspirational leader as that energy is contagious, meaning people who work for them and around them will be motivated and inspired by it.”

“When times are bad, as in a recession, these non-verbal signals will become even more important. A dynamic presence will inspire customers and employees and can even add energy to the voice when you speak on the phone. A good singer or actor will know the effect good posture has on the power and tone of the voice and the same technique applies when we speak to colleagues or clients on the phone.”

“That sense of energy can be contagious in face-to-face conversations and we associate the skills of persuasion, motivation and leadership with a dynamic physicality. In the current business climate the focus is on personal impact and presence. Sitting slumped or curled over your keyboard diminishes that impact, possibly sending out signals of low status, low morale, boredom or even hopelessness. In animal terms a slump is linked to fear, submission and low status. For humans the subliminal message can be worryingly similar.”

“Although slumping might feel like a state of relaxation and confidence in the workplace the signals it projects to others can be more like a lack of engagement, energy or keenness. Your posture at your desk is much like your choice of outfit: looking smart suggests professionalism but looking scruffy signals you can't be bothered to make an effort. Slumping is the body language equivalent of dressing scruffy.”

Louise Shipley at Fellowes, comments; “Good posture can not only help you make a good impression on your employer and colleagues from a visual aspect but it can also make you more productive in your job.

“With UK employees now sitting at a computer for an average 6.7 hours per day, sitting with an incorrect posture can lead to serious physical ailments such as back pain, RSI, neck pain and headaches which will not only make you less productive but also leave you with severe discomfort.

“Taking a quick workstation assessment will help you to identify potential problem areas and give you guidance on how to create an ergonomic and comfortable workspace to improve your posture and your productivity.”

Judi identifies the hidden messages that we might portray to our bosses when slumping at work and recommends ways of keeping our bodies safe and healthy in an ergonomically correct position when working at our desks.

The Seat-Percher

Perching on the edge of the seat and then curling forward will suggest high levels of fear and anxiety prompting a desire for flight. You look so ready to dash off that you appear to be lacking full commitment to your job. A simple solution is you use a foot and back rest to tilt your body into an upright and ergonomically correct pose.

The Over-Splayer

Too much splaying will signal arrogance though, making it a mistake to sit in the chair with your legs stretched out in front of you and your torso slumped. Splaying signals such a lack of desire to self-protect that it tells your boss or manager you have little in the way of respect for them or the job. Use a foot rest to train yourself out of stretching your legs and protect your back from pain through slumping.

The Horizontal Slumper

By placing your bottom on the front/middle of your seat and then leaning your torso back into the chair you create a slumped pose when sitting in front of your keyboard. It signals a cut-off, i.e. a lack of engagement with colleagues or even a lack of desire for the job. Again a foot and back rest to tilt your body into an upright pose and reduce the chance of developing pain.

The Cupped Chin Slump

When you sit with your chin cupped in the palm of your hand you might be intently thinking or reading something on your computer screen but you'll tend to look as though you're bored and disengaged. This pose suggests you're having to keep your head propped up and maybe your eyelids as well. A low-energy pose that can make it look as though you've had a string of late nights. A wrist rest would give you a comfortable place to rest your arms on the desk whilst reading and keeps your body in a relaxed and upright position without straining wrists or elbows.

To create your ideal workstation and ensure you are working comfortably, take a free assessment at www.ergo.fellowes.com/en/workstation-assessment

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Notes to editors:

About Fellowes

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Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit fellowes.com for more information.