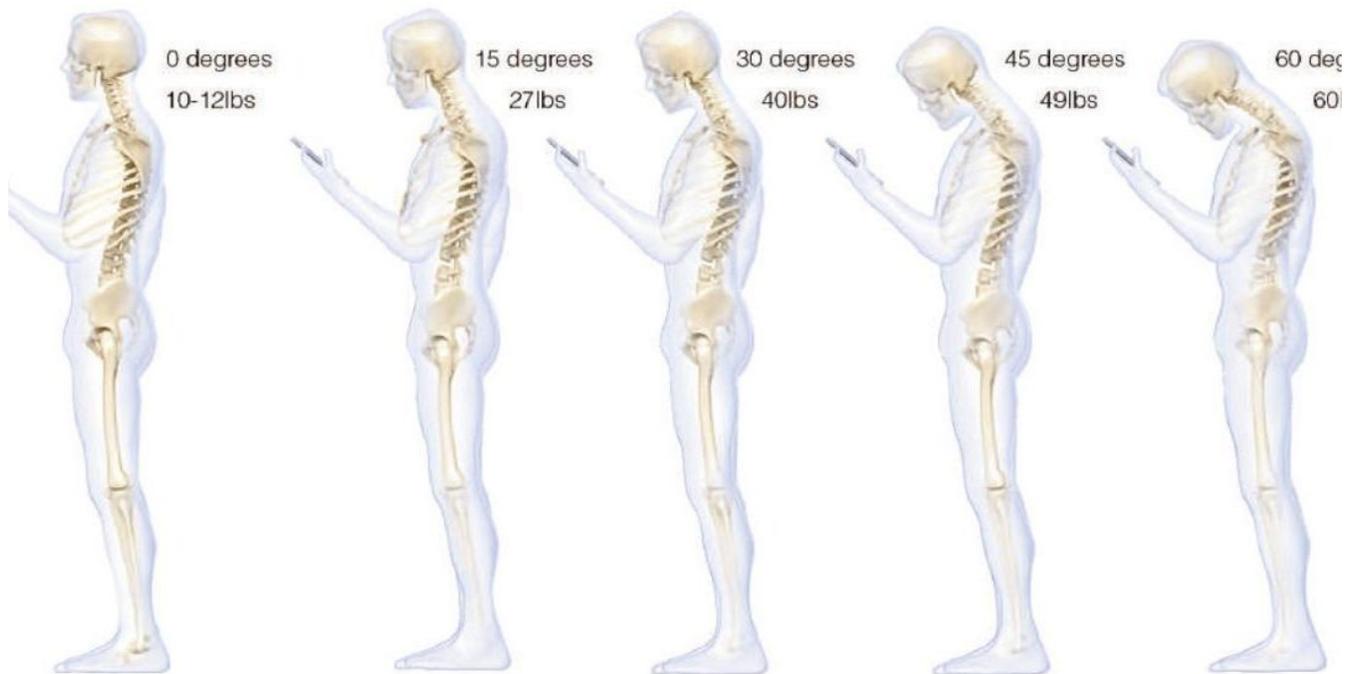


Taken from Bill Douglas's weekly newsletter. It is worth subscribing to even if you don't practice tai chi. Here is the link to subscribe: <http://ui.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?m=1101261673126&p=oi>

The Brain Science Behind Tai Chi Posture ...

Tai Chi Principle #1: Elevate the crown and lift the spirit. This means that the head should be upright so the Shen or (spirit) can reach the top of your head. . . the neck will be too stiff . . . and blood cannot flow through to the head. (Always remember that stiffness is the discipline of death) The feeling in your body should be light, buoyant, and natural.



For Health: By lifting the crown of the head . . . we align the cervical vertebrae in the neck and spine opening the blood flow traveling in and out of the brain. This allows us to think more clearly and move with ease. The Crown point is roughly where the tips of the ears intersect on the top of the head. This principle should feel very natural. The head and neck should feel very light and empty. When the neck is straight and empty, with the head effortlessly floating above the neck, one often finds relief of pain as well as a feeling of weightlessness. Improved blood and fluid circulation up and down the neck and in and out of the head is often found with this feeling. Good fluid circulation is necessary to maintain good health. Many students also find relief from jaw discomfort and pain. The benefits of practicing our Tai Chi with elevated crown and raised spirit are many. . . It is more than a concept; it is an important part of our physical practice. **Interesting new fact:** Science is now discovering that our brain has a system of lymphatic vessels located in the dura mater, the covering of the brain. The major arteries and veins that are within the dura mater contain a lymphatic system that the brain uses together with the Immune system to get rid of waste from the head. . .This is essentially **Drain Pipes in Our Brains.**

Unfortunately, so many people have bad posture, allowing the neck to push forward (computer/ or chicken neck), upward (showing the throat) or downward (low spirit or cell phone neck). This constricts the flow of blood going in and out of the brain and prevents the alignment needed for health and power. . . In Tai Chi one of the first things we learn is to keep this alignment in each and every movement, and not only while doing our Tai Chi forms, but we take it with us into our everyday lives. Many Tai Chi players have discovered that while practicing Elevating the Crown and Lifting the Spirit they have experienced clearer thinking, they are much more alert and aware, they experience better sleep, and feel happier overall. Is this just a coincidence? Or is this 1st Tai Chi principle assisting the brain in eliminating waste through this newly found lymphatic system? . . . we are aware of our surroundings and can respond quickly. This is possible through raising the crown and lifting the spirit. In the animal kingdom, a predator will choose its prey by whether or not they are paying attention. If not, they can easily be separated from the group. And yes, other reasons do factor in, but this is a very important part. It's not any different with humans. Criminals often look for weak, unaware individuals, and they will always choose the easy target. By lifting our crown and raising our spirit, we change our level of awareness. . . the crown should be gently lifted, the chin should be slightly down and in, keeping the neck against the back of your collar. This raises the crown and greatly reduces the chance of getting a neck or head injury if hit. This posture also protects the neck while straightening the spine, increasing power, lightness, and agility in the body.

To view an excellent video by Dr. Daniel S. Reich, Ph.D., M.D. explaining more on this topic, go to the below link: <https://taichionlineclasses.com/tai-chi-principle-1-elevate-the-crown-and-lift-the-spirit/>