



IS A TABLET OR SMART PHONE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Women Most at Risk for iPad or Text Neck

According to a new study conducted by the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, bad posture is associated with using smartphones, tablet computers and other electronic devices that are widely used nowadays. The persistent neck and shoulder pain that is more commonly found in women than men is referred to as “iPad or text neck” by the study.

Theoretically, it should be the more hours you spend bent over an iPad, the more neck and shoulder pain you experience – but what they found is that time is not the most important risk factor. Rather, it’s gender and specific postures

Next time you are out and about, sitting in a café or having a quiet night in with the family, take a look around you at all the people using their smart phones and tablet computers. How are they holding the device and positioning their body? Many will be tilting their head forward, curving their shoulders and therefore increasing pressure at the cervical spine...it may not bother them today or tomorrow, but in a year or so that cumulative use may add up to some serious neck and back pain.

WHAT CAN CAUSE THE NECK SYMPTOMS

Stiffness, soreness and aching in the neck and upper back shoulder are the most commonly felt symptoms of the text neck condition. The results of the study showed that a lot of even young adults felt discomfort and back pain as they were frequently using electronic devices in positions that are not the most comfortable for the human body. It's worth adding the participants didn't always have static workstations and they often sat in areas without back support.

Interestingly the results showed that using a device in more uncommon postures such as lying on the side or on the back was significantly associated with symptoms. This was in agreement with other studies that have found that non-neutral joint angles from non-desk usage of laptop computers and smart phones can lead to greater levels of discomfort.



WHAT POSTURE

Posture often depends on the available supporting surfaces and environments (e.g. holding a device in hand while sitting in a chair). Prolonged cervical flexion is commonly observed when the iPad or phone is placed flat on a desk or when held in a position below eye level as on your lap. This may cause the cervical extensor muscles to be lengthened and put a larger load on these muscles. It is logical that the postures users assume when using devices can have implications for developing neck and shoulder symptoms.

Basically- Flexing the neck forward for long periods of time puts pressure on your spine, causing neck and shoulder pain. Sedentary behavior and bad posture while reading are also contributing factors.

TIPS TO PREVENT PROBLEMS

- Sit with in a chair with back support:- And perhaps that's something for building and cafe planners to think about: Installing benches or other chairs without back support invites people to crunch down with iPads in their laps, contributing to posture-related pain problem
- Use a posture reminder device:- Also known as "posture trainers" or "posture coaches," these small, wearable devices adhere directly to the skin or clip on to clothing and beep to let you know when you're slouching.
- Take a stand: Place your iPad or phone propped or on a stand (rather than a flat surface) and attach a keyboard in order to achieve a more upright posture when using your tablet.
- Use it for less than 20 minutes at a time, less than this if you are already a sufferer of neck or shoulder problems.
- Use stands or prop the device up so that you avoid gripping it -this can cause problems in the forearm as well as causing you to bend your neck forward. If you do need to hold it try to keep the wrist straight

HINDMARSH PHYSIOTHERAPY AND SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000

MORE TIPS

- Only use the onscreen keyboard for short messages for anything longer use an external keyboard or a PC
- Alternate between the left and right hands for navigation
- When reading think about your posture. Lean back rather than forward to avoid strain on the neck
- If using a smart phone, hold it at eye level don't look down to it
- Exercise to strengthen neck and shoulder muscles

DONT FORGET ABOUT THE CHILDREN



Don't forget the children – they will watch and learn...not only will they think it's acceptable to use phones and tablets for long periods if you do, but they will also observe your posture and without realising may adopt a similar posture leading them to suffer as well.

HINDMARSH PHYSIOTHERAPY AND SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000

MOST IMPORTANT IS EXERCISE

Consider adding back extension and strengthening exercises to your regimen. Get a posture analysis and some tips on how to straighten and strengthen your back through exercise and awareness.

Additionally try to build your core- not with curls that will reinforce the flexed spine position but Pilates and stabilising exercises in functional positions.

Speak with our physios, exercise physiologist or your personal trainer at the gym. And finally, really check your workspace and work habits. That's where we spend the most time. Make sure to get up, stretch, or walk about.

Using these electronic devices is such a part of our modern lives. In order to reduce the risk of developing long-term neck and shoulder problems, we need to think about how technology can affect human ergonomics and posture.



EXERCISES TO AVOID OR LIMIT

- Ones that cause you to poke your head forward
- With correct form they can be ok- just have a trainer or physio check your form when doing them
- Some exercises to limit maybe:
 - Crunches
 - Chest Fly
 - Chest Press
 - Knee Extensions
 - Lat Pull Downs (Behind the Head)
 - Seated Rows
 - Toe Touch with a Twist
 - Hamstring Stretches
 - Back Stretches
 - Cardiovascular Exercises That Put You in a Slouched Position
 - Yoga Poses That Put You in a Slouched Position

SOME EXERCISES TO ENCOURAGE

- Chin Tuck or neck retraction
- Shoulder retraction
- Anterior shoulder stretch
- Chest Stretches
- Angel exercise



HINDMARSH PHYSIOTHERAPY AND SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000



If you are a seasoned phone or tablet user, if you find yourself rubbing your shoulders or neck after a long day or if you are noticing more pronounced aches and pains, our physios at Hindmarsh can help you out. If you would like some advice, more information or if you would like to make an appointment, call our Clinic on 83462000 today .

OTHER RESOURCES



We are passionate about providing our patients and community with information on prevention and management

We have put together a comprehensive free e-Book guide to understanding and managing Back pain, We explain the causes and contributing factors, useful advice and tips on self management, signs and symptoms.

[Click this image to download your own copy](#)

This PDF is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment and should not be interpreted as such. Always seek advice from a qualified medical professional and use of this information is at your own risk

You can contact us [here](#) if you would like an appointment- just click