



Posture Plus Top Ten (or Eleven) Tips

Neck Pain

- 1. Pillow.** Make sure your pillow adequately supports the curve of your neck whether you lie on your back or side or both. Change your pillow every 1-3 years to guard against pillow wear and tear as well as the accumulation of dust mites. *(See the Posture Plus Tempur Neck Pillows handout)*
- 2. Sleeping postures.** *Do not* sleep on your tummy as it forces your neck into a position of extreme rotation and extension for long periods of time. This is a very stressful position for neck joints and should be avoided.
- 3. Travel.** When travelling use a travel pillow to hold your neck in the appropriate alignment. *(See the Posture Plus Tempur Travel Pillows handout)*
- 4. Office work-station setup.** Adjust your furniture and equipment in order to promote an optimal head and neck position at your work-station when using computers *(See the Posture Plus “A Guide to Work with Computers” handout)*.
- 5. Stretch and mobilise your neck regularly throughout the day.** Stretching the muscles that attach from your neck to your shoulders is best done gently and often. It is especially beneficial after warming the neck with moist heat (i.e. a hot shower, bath, heat pack). *[Warning: In some cases if you have acute neck pain, ice may provide more pain relief than heat [place an ice pack on your neck for 10 minutes, positioning a wet towel between your skin and the ice pack] and ask your Physiotherapist when it is appropriate to start stretching)*. *(See the Posture Plus Neck Stretches handout)*
- 6. Take regular breaks.** Even if you are sitting in perfect alignment, static postures while working at your computer, studying and reading cause stress to the neck discs, joints and muscles – get up and move so that you lubricate your joints and encourage blood flow to the muscles - *be dynamic*.
- 7. Avoid carrying heavy loads on one side.** Carrying excessive weight on one side compromises your spinal alignment and stresses the muscles, joints and ligaments around your neck. Even out the load, ask for help or make extra trips with lighter loads.
- 8. Stand tall!** Be aware of your posture at home, work and play – lengthen through your spine, keep your head up, open up across the front of your chest and relax your shoulders down and away from your ears. Regularly check your neck and shoulder posture using mirrors when in a lift, when walking down the street looking into shop windows and in the gym.
- 9. Use your phone wisely.** *Never ever* cradle your phone between your neck and shoulder – use correctly or use a headset. Watch your head position when using your mobile phone. Lift your mobile up rather than lower your head down to view the screen.
- 10. Massage.** Regular remedial massage and self-massage techniques will help to relax over worked muscles and prepare them to cope with everyday stresses.
- 11. Bra’s.** A recent study in Australia found that between 70-100% of young woman assessed were wearing a bra which was the wrong size! There is a correlation between incorrectly fitting bras, tension headaches and spinal pain. Take the Posture Plus Bra Checklist with you when you next go shopping for new bras! *(See the Posture Plus Bra Checklists – for Everyday and Sports)*.

Warning: If you feel any increase in pain or discomfort when trying the Top Ten Tips for Neck Pain – stop immediately and contact your Physiotherapist.