



AWARENESS

KEEP YOUR CHIN UP

The average person spends over four hours a day scrolling and texting on their cellphone, which has resulted in unfortunate modern-day condition known as: Text Neck Syndrome.

Symptoms of 'text neck' include headaches as well as back, neck and shoulder pain – caused by muscle imbalances due to having a forward head posture, which happens when the chin is dropped.

According to Physiopedia, in addition to these common symptoms, there can also be more serious long-term damage as a result of this condition, such as:

- Early onset of arthritis
- Spinal degeneration
- Disc compression
- Muscle weakness
- Loss of lung capacity

How to avoid text neck?

While it's unrealistic to banish cellphone and tablet use altogether, especially when it's become such an intrinsic part of our lives, taking a preventative approach and becoming more mindful of postural correction can help.

Spine-health offers the following suggestions and adjustments to prevent text-neck pain.

- When using your phone, raise it up closer to the eye level so the head does not need to be tilted forward.

- Don't rely on your phone as a crutch for boredom and limit social media as much as possible. Instead of checking your phone when you're out and about, breathe.
- Adopt a good posture for the whole body and take regular movement breaks.
- Arch and stretch. Arch the neck and upper back backward periodically to ease muscle pain. Doing even 10 minutes of yoga a day can make a big difference and helps to increase body awareness.
- When waiting in a queue, stand up straight. Good posture, with the chin tucked in and shoulders pulled back, keeps the body aligned in a neutral position.
- Exercise regularly. A strong, flexible back and neck are more able to handle extra stress. Some research indicates that teenagers who are active in low-impact team sports or endurance sports are less likely to have neck pain.

When to see a doctor

If neck pain keeps recurring and is accompanied by a severe headache, fever, nausea, unintended weight loss, dizziness, pain or tingling that radiates down into the arm or hand, it is important to seek medical attention in order to get the right treatment.

While there's no single method guaranteed to alleviate your tech-induced pains, at the end of the day, it doesn't hurt to stretch and exercise to keep your muscles active and flexible.