



22 August 2022

New Health Warning for Australians Working from Home

Workspace Week is 22-28 August 2022 – Work Well from Anywhere!

Today, the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) launched Workspace Week with the release of alarming statistics prompting a health warning urging Australians to correct their poorly set up home workspaces to avoid any physical injuries that may be caused by unsafe workspace practices.

Due to living with COVID-19 for the past three years, the majority of Australians have worked in hybrid settings shared between home and office locations with new data revealing they may be risking their health by not working in ergonomically correct workspaces.

ACA President, Dr David Cahill (the organisation behind Spinal Health Week in May) said, *“With more Australians working from home than ever before, those using computers at home who are not correctly set up in an ergonomic workspace, may be risking their spinal health and overall wellbeing.”*

Following the survey conducted by the ACTU which found 42% of Australians working from home did not have a suitable workstation or the correct equipment; and the Federal Government’s announcement in August 2021 that up to two-thirds of Australians were still working from home, the ACA undertook two national surveys to evaluate the risk factors and develop solutions.

Dr Cahill said, *“While a by-product of the pandemic has seen working from home become normalised, the results of our recent surveys show alarming statistics that many Australians are yet to adjust to this ‘new normal’ and may be risking their health because they haven’t adopted safe work habits at home.”*

To gauge the impact on the health of people who’ve been working remotely since the pandemic began, in April 2022 the ACA commissioned a national survey with questions relating to working from home. Of the 1,003 adult respondents nationally, more than one third (34%) of Australians said they’d been working from home with the majority (70%) planning to continue to do so, even after restrictions lifted. Many of those working from home reported they worked at their dining table (33%), 16% worked from bed and 15% worked from their sofa rather than at a desk; while 67% reported that since working from home the hours spent working at their computers had increased.

Based on these findings, ACA conducted a second national survey, this time among ACA chiropractors to learn the impact the lack of working in non-ergonomically correct workspaces is having on patients. The results were alarming, revealing that a large number of Australians are putting their health at risk due to home workspaces not being set up correctly.

Of the ACA chiropractors who participated in the survey (153), 86% reported an increase in existing patients presenting with workplace-related spinal health issues with 78% reporting an increase in new patients presenting with spinal health problems as a result of working from home.

Overall, 90% said the most common workspace spinal health issues reported by patients was neck pain, 65% reported increased shoulder stiffness, 55% reported lower back pain and 53% reported that patients are suffering headaches.



While ACA chiropractors reported that some patients enjoyed the increased flexibility that has improved their work/life balance, provided they can still work some days in the office; when asked what they observed as having the greatest impact on the health of their patients working from home; 89% reported patients had increased neck and shoulder stiffness due to poor ergonomic workspaces and 41% reported an increase in patient stress levels due to greater workloads and longer working hours. 75% of ACA chiropractors surveyed said the decrease in incidental movement and exercise during the day impacted patients, and 48% reported that patients had formed bad habits (in general) resulting in decreased fitness and increased poor eating habits resulting in weight gain since working from home.

Dr Cahill said, *“Through national Workspace Week we aim to educate Australians about the importance of postural correctness in an ergonomic workspace environment so they can work well from anywhere. Implementing positive spinal health habits including using an ergonomic office chair, adjusting your laptop to eye level; and positioning your knees slightly below your hips when sitting, are all important factors in preventing spinal injuries when working from anywhere,”* said Dr Cahill.

“To minimise serious health risks to their spine, neck, and lower back and to maintain overall health and wellbeing, we’re urging the hundreds-of-thousands of Australians working from home to get moving and download our recently developed free resources.

“The Workspace Checklist can assist people to work safely in an ergonomic setting, while using the Straighten Up App to improve posture, stabilise core muscle groups, prevent spinal disability and enhance their overall health and wellbeing.”

“Those experiencing pain and those concerned about their spinal health when working from home or in other hybrid settings, should consider a chiropractor for professional advice.

Your local ACA chiropractor can help you better manage workspace ergonomics so you can take control of your spinal health as well as provide exercise programs specific to your needs,” said Dr Cahill.

For more information about Workspace Week, to download the free Workspace Checklist and Straighten Up app or to locate your local ACA chiropractor, visit workspaceweek.org.au.

#WorkWellAnywhere - #WorkWellFeelGreat

- ENDS -

This media release has been distributed by Insight Communications on behalf of the Australian Chiropractors Association.

For interviews with Australian Chiropractors Association representatives and case studies contact:

Media Contact:

Clare Collins | 0414 821 957 |

Alice Collins | 0414 686 091 | alice@insightcommunications.net.au

About ACA: The Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) is the leading voice for chiropractors in Australia, actively working to further the profession of chiropractic through improving the health of all Australians.

To find your nearest chiropractor visit: findachiro.org.au