

HEADS UP ON TECH NECK



SPINAL HEALTH WEEK

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CONSULT
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Factsheet

Heads Up On Tech Neck

What is tech neck?

Tech neck is the informal term used to describe Tension Neck Syndrome (TNS), a cervical spine related musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) also referred to as 'text neck'.

What causes tech neck?

Tech neck is a worldwide public health problem. Studies show tech neck is often caused by incorrect or overuse of mobile phones and other electronic devices including tablets and computers. When users spend too much time with their head bent forward reading from devices, the greater the frequency and duration, the more significant the impact is on the cervical spine. Incorrect, non-ergonomic posture and poor setup of computers at home, work or school can also lead to tech neck.

The severity of tech neck often equates to the amount of time spent using mobile phones or other electronic devices including tablets and computers.

What is the impact of tech neck on sufferers?

Tech neck caused by long-term, regular smartphone and computer use can limit daily activities, reduce work productivity and negatively impact overall quality of life, while the impact of chronic pain can lead to mental health disorders and impact the overall quality of life of sufferers.

Tech neck symptoms include headaches, neck, shoulder and upper back pain. Tech neck can also lead to postural problems and may cause changes to the natural curve of the cervical spine in older people.

Unresolved tech neck can be debilitating and impact long-term spinal health.

Who are most at risk of tech neck?

Anyone who regularly uses a mobile phone, tablet or computer at home, work or school or during leisure time, is at risk of developing tech neck.

How to prevent tech neck?

Academic studies show prolonged, non-ergonomic use of mobile phones, tablets and computers can increase pressure on the cervical spine leading to tech neck. Awareness of how to correctly use these devices and the importance of minimising the frequency and duration of use, plays a major role in preventing tech neck.

To help prevent tech neck, avoid incorrect, non-ergonomic posture habits when using smart devices and computers. Maintain good posture, take frequent breaks at regular intervals and do stretching exercises.

Good posture, taking regular breaks to move and stretch, combined with exercise can help minimise tech neck caused from injuring the cervical spine when using mobile phones, tablets or computers incorrectly.

ACA's top tips for tech neck prevention when using technology devices.

1. **SIT WITH COMFORTABLE UPRIGHT POSTURE** with shoulders relaxed and feet flat on the floor.
2. **STOP BENDING** your neck to look down at a phone or tablet. Hold the device at eye level.
3. **LIMIT THE TIME** spent using a phone to 2 hours per day, especially during leisure time.
4. **USE BOTH HANDS** or alternate between left and right when typing on a smart phone.
5. **DON'T WALK LOOKING DOWN** at a phone. Hold your head up straight and engage with the world.
6. **TAKE REGULAR MOVEMENT BREAKS** to look away from your device, move your neck from side to side and stretch every 10 minutes if using mobile devices and every 30 minutes if using computers.
7. **ENSURE COMPUTERS** are ergonomically set up correctly so the monitor is at eye level.
8. **USE AN ADJUSTABLE** ergonomic office chair so the knees are slightly lower than the hips.
9. **EXERCISE REGULARLY** to maintain a healthy spine and overall health and wellbeing.
10. **CONSULT AN ACA CHIROPRACTOR** to limit and treat spinal health problems including tech neck.

ACA provides a range of free helpful resources to help minimise tech neck, including the Ergonomic Checklist, Using Mobile Device Checklist and the Stand Corrected Stretching Poster.

Get the heads up on tech neck!

If you or someone you know suffer from tech neck, consult an ACA chiropractor. Chiropractic healthcare is an effective drug-free and low-risk treatment and is one of the most preferred treatment options for neck and back pain caused by tech neck.

Medical research studies including a Sydney University study have concluded opioids have a limited role in the management of acute neck pain.

Should tech neck sufferers use medication alone to treat neck and back pain?

While pain medications may offer adults temporary relief of pain caused by tech neck, academic studies including a study by Sydney University, show that opioids commonly prescribed for this purpose, do not relieve acute neck pain (lasting up to 12 weeks), and may exacerbate the condition causing increased pain.

Every week, more than 400,000 chiropractic consultations help everyday Australians maintain their spinal health and stand corrected.

Consulting an ACA Chiropractor can help!

ACA chiropractors are five-year university educated healthcare professionals who treat a range of musculoskeletal disorders including tech neck. They play a vital role in managing the spinal health of Australians by providing holistic healthcare that treats the cause of tech neck and not just the symptoms.

How do ACA chiropractors treat tech neck?

Using specialised non-surgical techniques including gentle spinal adjustments, various manual therapies and soft tissue techniques, ACA chiropractors can reduce tech neck pain, improve joint mobility, and reduce stiffness without the use of medication. An ACA chiropractor can offer advice on exercise and lifestyle choices to reduce the risk of tech neck and improve overall health and wellbeing.

ACA chiropractors are Australia's leaders in chiropractic healthcare.

If you suffer from tech neck and you're tired of spine-related pain bringing you down, adjust your thinking and consult an ACA chiro. Chiropractic healthcare can provide effective, drug-free treatment for pain caused by tech neck regardless of your age, profession or lifestyle. Consult an ACA chiropractor today to take back control of your spinal health and wellbeing by visiting [consultachiro.org.au](https://www.consultachiro.org.au).

Spinal Health Week is the Australian Chiropractors Association's flagship campaign aimed at educating Australians about the importance of maintaining positive spinal health. Look for the ACA member logo at your local chiropractic clinic or to locate an ACA chiropractor near you, visit

[spinalhealthweek.org.au](https://www.spinalhealthweek.org.au)

For a full list of references, visit [chiro.org.au/references](https://www.chiro.org.au/references)