

HEADS UP ON TECH NECK



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AUSTRALIAN
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CONSULT
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Factsheet

Heads Up On Tech Neck for Students

What is tech neck?

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

Too much screen time can cause tech neck in students of all ages.

Tech neck is a worldwide public health problem. Studies show that tech neck is often caused by incorrect or overuse of mobile phones and other electronic devices including tablets and computers. When students spend too much time with their head bent forward reading from phones or tablets, and the longer they spend in this position, the greater the impact on their spine. Incorrect, non-ergonomic postural habits and poor setup of laptops or desktop computers can also lead to students developing tech neck.

Movements such as bending the head, neck, and shoulders when using smartphones and portable devices, and distorting the neck position while sitting, studying, gaming or watching television, can progressively increase stress on the cervical spine.

Students should understand and be aware of how to correctly use smartphones and other electronic devices including tablets, laptops and computers.

What is the impact of tech neck on students?

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 spine. Data has shown a worldwide increase in tech neck among young people who spend a lot of time with their heads bent over devices putting stress on their cervical spine which can result in various complications, such as poor posture, premature wear, lacerations, degeneration, possible surgery, medical, psychological and social complications.

Students should minimise the risk of tech neck to maximise long-term spinal health.
Students who use smartphones for studying are more likely to suffer neck and shoulder pain than those who use smartphones for other purposes. It is recommended that students limit the use of smartphones especially during leisure time.

How to prevent tech neck in students.

Multiple 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. Students should avoid incorrect, non-ergonomic posture when using smart devices and computers and maintain a straight upright 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 among students when using technology devices.

1. **SIT WITH COMFORTABLE UPRIGHT POSTURE** with shoulders relaxed and feet flat on the floor.
2. **BE AWARE OF TIME SPENT USING TECHNOLOGY** by monitoring device use and taking regular breaks.
3. **STOP BENDING YOUR NECK** to look down at a phone or tablet. Hold the device at eye level.
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 so the monitor is at eye level and arm's length away.
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!

Studies show that 92% of students did not seek treatment for tech neck which can lead to long-term complications. Students who suffer from tech neck should 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.

Should students who suffer from tech neck use medication 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 or a family member suffer from tech neck and are tired of spine-related pain impacting your life, 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)