

Healthy Living

Patient Information from the American Chiropractic Association

Preventing Text Neck

Americans sent 110 billion text messages in December 2008, according to the Census Bureau. As technology advances, allowing us to do more tasks on smaller equipment, our bodies often pay the price. With a growing potential for injuries from technologies that we rely on, it's important to minimize the risks.

One problem that is becoming more prevalent is neck strain from the over-use of mobile devices, or "text neck."

What Causes Text Neck?

Text neck is caused by poor posture when using a mobile device. It's all too common to become hunched over with your head drooping forward and your shoulders rounded as you become engrossed in your messaging or games.

How to Avoid Text Neck

- Sit up straight with your chest out and your shoulders back.
- Bring your arms up in front of your eyes so that you don't need to look down to see the screen.
- Tuck your chin into your chest to look down rather than dropping your head forward.
- If you must use your mobile device for lengthy typing, invest in an external keyboard.
- Rest your forearms on a pillow while typing to help minimize neck tension.
- Avoid using mobile devices while in bright sun light. Straining to see the screen leads to jutting the chin forward, shifting work from the spine to the muscles that hold up the head.

The best way to avoid text neck is to limit the use of your mobile device. If you need to send a longer e-mail, wait until you have access to a computer or consider calling the person rather than texting.



Stretches for Frequent Texters

- Hand stretch. Start with your hands in a fist and stretch your fingers out as wide as they'll go and then return to a fist. Shoot for about 10 stretches with each hand. For added resistance you can stretch a rubber band around your fingers.
- Squeeze a stress ball. Do this for approximately 30 seconds for each hand.
- Chest stretch. To counteract the hunched posture of texting, stand up straight with your arms down at your sides. Turn your forearms until your thumbs are pointing at the wall behind you.



For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find a doctor of chiropractic near you, go to the Patient Information section on ACA's Web site at www.acatoday.org or call 800-986-4636.



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