

## "TECH-NECK"

Any task or activity that requires you to sit in one position for long hours can have an adverse effect on your posture. You may be happily engrossed with your laptop or the tablet or working on an assignment. A study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Microsoft showed that holding any device (mobile phone, laptop or tablet) too low in your lap can force the muscles and bones in the neck into an unnatural posture, which may strain or aggravate other muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, and spinal discs. Over time, poor posture reduces the range of motion in your joints. The neck problems described in the study above — and repetitive stress injuries from tasks such as typing — may occur, too. Such strains or injuries are what are called Tech-necks.

Fortunately, good ergonomics and regular posture checks can help combat these problems.

### Ergonomics for computers, phones, and tablets

#### If you use a laptop or desktop computer:

- Choose a chair with good lumbar support, or place a pillow against the small of your back.
- Position the top of your monitor so it's just below eye level.
- Sit up straight with your head level, not bent forward.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed and your elbows close to your body.
- Keep hands, wrists, forearms, and thighs parallel to the floor.

#### If you use a handheld phone:

- Avoid propping the phone between your head and shoulder.
- Consider investing in a comfortable, hands-free headset. Depending on your needs, you can choose one designed for use with cordless phones, landlines, or computers.

## If you use an e-reader or tablet:

- Buy a case that allows you to prop the device at a comfortable viewing angle, one that doesn't require you to bend your neck much.
- Change your position every 15 minutes. Just change your hands, shift your weight. Stand up or sit down.

## Minor exercises:

- Throw your head back and relax your muscles. You may also stretch your chin upwards stretching the front neck muscles. This will prevent double chin.
- Press down your shoulders, count slowly till 5, then bring them to normal position before raising them as if to touch the ears. Again hold in that position and count till 5. Repeat 5 times.
- Rotate your neck 2-3 times, clockwise and anti-clock wise starting from chin down position to going right, up, bringing it down on the left side and back to starting position.
- Tilt your head towards right and left shoulders alternately, pressing it close to the shoulder, 3-5 times.
- Press your chin towards your upper chest and feel the stretch on the back of the neck.
- Turn your head alternately towards right and left till the chin is in line with the shoulder.

