

Cell Phone Use Strains the Neck

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As a society, we have all become more reliant on the use of cell phones and handheld devices. We stay connected and informed, but at what cost to our health? The amount of time you spend looking down at the screen on your phone or device strains your back and especially your neck. You may have even heard the term “text neck”, as the problem becomes more prevalent. We can make smarter choices about how to use devices every day, and reduce strain on our bodies without having to unplug and disconnect.

Looking Down Brings You Down

The average adult head weighs between 10 and 12 pounds, and neck muscles are meant to support the weight of the head in a neutral position. Looking down at a screen increases the strain on your neck as if your neck is carrying a lot more weight. Tilting your head forward just 15 degrees adds enough force to double the weight your neck is supporting, and the greater the angle, the greater strain. Many people who text with their chin near the neck are tilting the head forward 60 degrees, which increases the load to about 60 pounds!

Save Your Neck!

Starting with good posture will always reduce strain on your neck. Sit up straight with your shoulders lined up above your hips and your head upright. Hold your phone or device up higher rather than looking further down to see what is on your screen. If you work on a computer a lot, position your monitor at eye level to avoid looking up or down too much.

Stretching your neck is also important to reduce the risk of painful strain. When your neck muscles are strong and flexible, you are less likely to have a painful spasm.

You should make your technology work for you! There are mobile apps available that can alert you when your phone is being held at a bad angle for your neck. You can also set reminders on your device to take breaks from looking at the screen and to stretch throughout the day.