



**BODY IN  
MOTION**

PHYSIO • REHAB • PILATES

*“Keeping You Moving”*

*Body In Motion’s team of physiotherapists are here not only to help you back from injury, but also to help you reduce your risk of getting injured. As education is a key component of injury prevention, please read this month’s look at **Posture and its effects on the neck**, and feel free to contact any one of the team to help reduce your risk!*

## Poor Posture? What a Pain in the Neck!

When most people hear the word “posture” they think back to their childhood and being told (usually by their well-meaning mothers) to stand up straight. When one considers the working definition of posture to be “the position from which movement begins and ends”, it becomes easier to see that, while mum’s advice was (and still is) very good, there is much more to this “position” than just standing up straight.

Take for example head, neck and shoulder posture. The head, and all of its valuable contents, is perched on top of the neck. The neck (or cervical spine) is made up of 7 vertebra that house the spinal nerves, and is supported by muscle, tendon and ligament. Whether it’s full of rocks or of brains, the material in your head is heavy, and its position on your neck forms a big part of your entire upper body’s posture. As such, where your head is in space may have a lot to answer for when it come to that proverbial pain in your neck.

If we imagine “good” head, neck and shoulder posture to be (roughly) built around the ears being in vertical alignment with the shoulders, the chin being in vertical alignment with the sternum, and the shoulders being in vertical alignment with the hips, it is easy to see how often we find ourselves out of “good posture”. And this is where many problems start. You see, the “average” head imparts a modest 5kg of load through the neck when in the “good” or neutral position; an easily manageable load. When the head / neck angle increases to 60 degrees (as in when looking down), that load increases to a massive 25kg! This is NOT a manageable load for any period of time...



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This poor head / neck positioning is becoming an increasingly big problem today, as many of us spend more and more time on mobile phones and tablets, collectively known in the industry as “Unsupported Electronic Mediums”, or UEMs. Whereas desktop computers used to represent our biggest pains in the neck, the newer, smaller and infinitely more addictive UEMs have taken over that mantle with vigour. Stooping over that little glowing connectivity device while sitting, while walking, and (regrettably still) while driving is a popular pastime, but it comes at the expense of a massive load to your neck. And with that comes an increased risk of injury.

It has recently been established that there is a CAUSAL REALTIONSHIP between neck problems and UEM use above 20hrs / week, or about 3hrs / day. Simply put, that means if you are spending 3hrs (or more) a day on your UEM, you will develop neck issues. This is of particular concern when you consider that the average time spent on UEMs in our part of the world is about 4hrs / day. And think of the children too for a moment: the average student leads the charge at 5hrs every day!

So, all this to say, if you have a stiff or sore neck, have a look up from your hand held unsupported electronic device, and spare a thought for your mum’s advice. Turns out she was right.... again.

In all seriousness, the neck is a complex biomechanical area, and injury to any of its joints, ligaments, muscles, bones or nerves can be significantly problematic. If you are hoping to avoid the dreaded “txt neck”, or if you are having trouble with your neck through injury or “poor” posture, please visit our website ([www.bodyinmotionphysio.co.nz](http://www.bodyinmotionphysio.co.nz)) or, better yet, call us on 07 927 3330 and we’ll help you get going... better!

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