

Computer Tips



How you use your computer can be a major cause of back, neck and shoulder pain. Poor posture while sitting at the computer and lack of regular breaks and exercise can all contribute to the problem. Here are some simple tips on how to help prevent injuries when using your computer:

- Always sit in a good quality, adjustable and comfortable office chair. Pull your chair close to the desk and adjust the seat height so that your elbows, hips, and knees are bent at approximately 90 degrees. Your forearms should be parallel to or sloping down toward the desktop. Your feet should rest flat on the floor – use a footrest if necessary.
- Adjust the backrest of your chair to support the curve in your lower back and to help keep you upright when typing. Relax your shoulders.
- Sit up straight and position your computer screen at a comfortable viewing distance, generally at arm's length. Keep the top of the screen below eye level and directly in front of you. Don't use your screen positioned to one side.
- Don't work from documents flat on the desk. Use a document holder set close to the screen at the same distance from your eyes, or prop your work on a folder between the keyboard and the screen.
- Ensure the screen is easy to see. Eliminate reflections by adjusting and tilting the screen and ensure there is no light source directly behind it. Adjust the brightness control to suit.

- Don't use a notebook computer for extended periods. If this is unavoidable then check that the top of the screen is below eye level, and plug in a mouse and a normal size keyboard.
- Limit continuous computer use and take a break every 30 minutes to do some neck, wrist and shoulder stretches. Focus on a distant point to give your eyes a break. Get up and walk around every hour. Change your tasks regularly to alter the load on your body.
- Learn to touch type so you don't have to bend your head forward searching for the keys. Alternate between mouse and keyboard by varying your inputting task. Learn the function keys and short cuts to reduce the amount of mouse use.
- Maintain your general fitness. Keep yourself strong, active and flexible. Manage the stresses of work and study with a balance of exercise, relaxation and other stress management approaches.
- Take notice of early warnings. If you feel an ache or discomfort in any part of your body, check your posture, take a break and if the pain persists, see your local therapist.

Sustained poor posture leads to shortening and tightening of postural muscles. With the passage of time this can lead to active trigger points, pain and dysfunction. A common and effective treatment method to reduce muscle tension and pain is Trigger Point Dry Needling (TDN). TDN involves the use of a fine filament needle inserted into the trigger point to 'de-activate' it. A controlled pistoning effect on the needle causes the muscle to elicit a local twitch response. This twitch is felt like a small momentary muscle cramp. Following this cramp like sensation the muscle relaxes and the tension is released, thereby restoring a better balance and muscle tension. TDN is commonly used to treat postural injuries as it has been found to be very effective in restoring function and reducing pain.

To locate the nearest qualified clinician in TDN 'click here'.