
The Neck: Important Part of Human Body

The neck is the part of the spine that connects a person's head to the rest of the body. The neck consists of the esophagus, larynx, and part of the trachea. In addition, it is made up of major blood vessels, muscles, and tendons and the cervical bones of the spine. The neck has a very important job because it needs to be flexible enough to move, but also strong enough to support the weight of the head. Text neck is the term used to describe the neck pain and damage sustained from looking down at a cell phone, tablet, or other wireless devices too frequently and for too long. Text neck most commonly causes neck pain and soreness. In addition, looking down at a cell phone too much each day can lead to upper back pain ranging from a chronic, nagging pain to sharp, severe upper back muscle spasms, and possibly even shoulder pain and tightness which result in painful shoulder muscle spasms. In the article *Teen's Compulsive Texting Can Cause Neck Injury* by Lily Dayton, the effects text neck can have on a person is explicitly stated along with some of the best known ways to prevent it and ease the problems it causes.

A recent study shows that seventy nine percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 44 have their cell phones with them almost all the time—with only two hours of their waking day spent without their cell phone on hand. When it comes to the treatment of text neck, prevention is key. Another key factor is to hold the cell phone at eye level in order to not look down at the screen. Any prolonged period when the head is looking down, excessive strain is being put on the neck. The average weight of the head ranges from around ten to twelve pounds in the neutral position.

The more one tilts their head forward, the more the weight increases. A recent study in the *Surgical Technology International* journal quantified the problem and states that as the head tilts forward 15 degrees from the neutral position, the forces on the cervical spine and supporting musculature increase to 27 pounds. As the tilt increases, the forces increase to 40 pounds at 30 degrees, 49 pounds at 45 degrees and 60 pounds at 60 degrees.

Exercise also helps to ease the pain caused by constantly staring down at our electronics. Dayton writes "Increasing the range of motion in the neck keeps the cervical spine flexible and helps maintain its normal curvature. Gentle stretches relieve neck tension as well as lengthen muscles that may have shortened due to chronic poor posture." Lanman and Cuellar, spinal neurosurgeons at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, suggest "simple lifestyle changes to relieve the stress from the text neck posture" and they recommend holding cell phones in front of the face, or near eye level, while texting. They also suggest using two hands and two thumbs to create a more symmetrical and comfortable position for the spine.

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Beyond smartphone use, the spinal surgeons recommend that people who work a desk job that requires them to constantly be on computers or on tablets use an elevated monitor stand so it sits at a natural horizontal eye level. With laptops, they recommend a similar adaptation by using a separate keyboard and mouse so the laptop can be at eye level and still create a comfortable position while they are typing. Doctor Lanman tells patients to lie on their beds and hang their heads over the edge in order to extend the neck backward to restore the normal arc in the neck. While sitting, he recommends aligning the neck and spine by checking that the ears are over the shoulders and the shoulders are over the hips.

In essence, I believe, as some studies suggest, text neck may possibly lead to chronic problems due to early onset of arthritis in the neck. As a generation and overall, as a society we Yaghooby 3are all addicted to our electronic devices and need to learn to be less dependent on them and look up more than we look down.

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