Stepping Stones to a better posture: Computer Sense

Advice from the British Chiropractic Association on the perfect PC posture

Whether at home, at work, or on the move, more and more of us are spending large parts of our day using a computer. When sitting and concentrating on the screen for so long, we may not be aware that the position we are in is, in fact, harmful to our spine. To help combat this and protect our backs, the British Chiropractic Association has some advice to keep in mind when twittering, blogging, surfing or emailing!

Essential Adjustments

Always take the time to adjust your chair if you share your computer with others in the household or work at 'hot desks' at work.

- Your seat should be adjusted so that your feet are flat on the ground, your knees bent, but with a slope from your hips to your knees. You should end up with your hips higher than your knees and your eyes level with the top of the computer screen. *You may need to put the screen on a stand or even on a ream of paper to bring it to the right height.*
- Relax when sitting into your chair, making sure you have your bottom against the seat back with your shoulder blades are touching the back rest of the chair.
- Arms should be flat and your elbows level with the desk or table you are using. Use a seat with arm rests.
- Take regular breaks. Never sit at the computer for more than 40 minutes; less if possible.
- When you take a break, walk around and stretch a little; do something completely different.
- Remove any obstacles from under your desk to ensure you have enough leg room.

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On the move in the house or out and about with a laptop:

The portability of a laptop makes it very convenient and flexible to use, but it is tempting to use them in situations where you might be in an awkward position. You may not realise that you are in an uncomfortable or potentially pain inducing position if you are concentrating on what you are doing.

- If using a laptop, invest in a stand to put it on (or use a ream of paper or other object). This ensures the screen is at eye level.
- For laptops used in the home, it is a good idea to buy a normal keyboard and mouse to plug in, as this makes it much easier to use the laptop in a more 'back friendly manner'.
- When on the move with your laptop, take time to check your bag or briefcase for items you will not need. It is amazing how much unwanted 'stuff' quickly accumulates and the additional weight in your bag is extra weight that your shoulders and back have to bear.
- Use a rucksack design laptop case, carry it on both shoulders and adjust the straps so that the bag is held close to your back.
- On the train……If you are on the train and must use your laptop, don't sit for long periods doing this, as you are looking down onto the screen with your head unsupported.

Further information about BCA chiropractic treatment can be obtained by logging onto www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk For further information contact the British Chiropractic Association on 0118 950 5950.

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