

Churchlands Physiotherapy Centre

Computer Ergonomics & Physiotherapy

Does work give you a pain in the neck and back?

With the rapid development of computers an increasing number of people are working in offices for long hours in relatively fixed positions, performing repetitive movements while working hard to meet deadlines. These aches and pains are felt in the neck, shoulder, upper and lower back, wrist and elbow joints. In some cases, the nerves to the hand become compressed, causing weakness and/or tingling in the fingers. These symptoms can occur in the onset of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), which may include damage to tendons, muscles, nerves and other soft tissues from repeated physical movements over time.

Make sure you don't neglect the importance of posture as you sit down to your computer everyday. Not only can poor posture cause pain whilst you work, you may find your home and sporting life severely affected as well. It can also lead to long term damage which will affect you in later years.

Physiotherapy Can Help!

A physiotherapist with knowledge in ergonomics and work related conditions can perform an individual work station assessment. Recommendations will be given such as the correct seating and workspace layout to prevent such conditions happening. Risks will be identified and advice given on correct posture, height of the desk and chair, position of screen, mouse and keyboard.

Guidelines for healthy computer use

Get Moving & Stretching: Get up from your work station for a short stretch or walk around to promote blood flow to fatigued muscles every hour.

Variety: Add variety to your tasks. Take every break as an opportunity to go for a short walk and stretch. Try to vary your tasks.

Reduce Strain: Make sure you are sitting correctly with your back supported. Speak to us about ways to make sure you are sitting in the best possible position.

Talk to your physiotherapist: This pain and discomfort can be prevented, but if symptoms do occur, early intervention is the best form of treatment. If you are experiencing regular or increasing discomfort while sitting at your computer, take early corrective action. A physiotherapist will listen to your symptoms and assess you to help provide appropriate treatment, including information about correct posture and positioning at your workstation. They will also work towards an earlier return to your daily lifestyle as well as provide guidance on how to prevent recurrence of injury.



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Core Stability and Back Pain

What is Core Stability?

Core stability is the training of the abdominal muscles to support the spine and is fundamental to the Pilates concept, Yoga, and current physiotherapy treatment of low back pain.

The abdominal muscles comprise the 'sit up' muscles. Recent research suggests that the deepest layer of these muscles is one of the most important providers of support to the low back.

Core stability is important as it provides a protective muscular corset, reducing excessive movement of the easily damaged joints. It helps prevent low back pain caused by the placement of the spine into extreme positions.

Why is Core Stability useful in the treatment of back pain?

Pain has been shown to turn muscles off. Pain encourages sufferers to adopt pain relieving positions but ultimately they add to the problem.

Core stability provides a focus, both mental and physical, away from symptomatic relief and towards constructive support of the painful structures.

Improving core stability and postural awareness can sometimes produce instant relief. However, a slow reduction in pain, requiring some commitment from the sufferer is more common.

How we can help you!

We can devise a program for you that will incorporate core stability exercises to treat your back pain. Core stability exercises improve the muscular corset around the back, and it is important to isolate the exact

muscles for the desired effect. If the whole tummy is tensed up, the stability muscles do not strengthen up well. Why not ask your physiotherapist about it today!

Symptoms of instability

- *Sudden jolts of pain* in the back for no particular reason
- Difficulty getting back up to the vertical after bending forwards, *often having to push up on the fronts of the thighs to stand upright*
- *A sudden catch of pain* when almost returned to vertical from bent over
- A sudden severe pain with a *giving way feeling of one leg*

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