

The Courtyard Clinic

Physical
Health

Text Neck



Osteopathy/Physiotherapy Sports & Remedial Massage

- Back, Neck & Shoulder pain
- Joint & Muscle Injuries
- Headaches
- Arthritis
- Rib Pain
- Sports Injuries

Podiatry/Chiropody

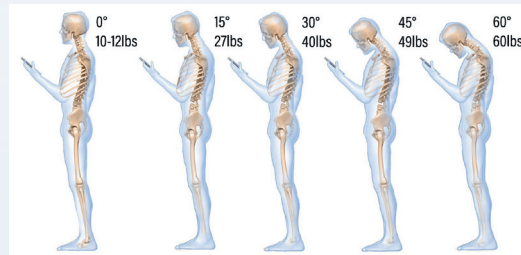
- Toenail Problems
- Corns & Callouses
- Verrucae
- Diabetic Foot Checks
- Foot Odour
- Footwear Advice



Please note The Courtyard Clinic's
new address.

There has been growing awareness and increasing numbers of articles in the media in recent years about a condition often referred to as "Text Neck". I've also heard it called "Kindle neck"

Whilst, as a musculoskeletal issue, it's nothing new, it is increasingly common as people spend more time on mobile phones and tablets. In a neutral posture, our head sits comfortably over our centre of gravity, its weight supported by the spinal column underneath it. When we take our head away from neutral by moving our neck in any direction, muscles, joints and ligaments must work harder to support the weight of our head. It has been calculated that the stress on your neck approximately doubles with every inch your head tilts down.



Try it out as you sit reading this article. Sit straight, with your head in a neutral position and eyes closed focussing your concentration on the sensation you feel in your neck. Tilt your head slightly forwards and feel the stretch in the back of your neck, tilt your head a bit further forward and feel how much heavier your head feels and how hard you're working to hold it there.

Usually you do this and don't notice it because you're focussed on something else; writing/reading that text, looking at that photo album, ordering that thing, reading that article or scrolling through social media.

This posture isn't exactly new; people have done this for centuries with books, drawings, sewing, and many other activities. The condition is referred to as "Text Neck" because the saturation of mobile devices, and our cultural addiction to them, have multiplied the amount of time we spend hunched over.



Over an extended period this can lead to postural changes, muscular tightness and joint/tendon/ligament irritation. You've probably been staring at your device for years and haven't noticed any problems.

That's where this condition's insidious nature is important to understand. Its effects are subtle but cumulative. As well as simple musculoskeletal symptoms, Text Neck has been linked to headaches, neurological issues and depression. These symptoms can creep up on you slowly, but chances of a negative impact on your health increase each time you hunch over your phone.

Maybe most alarming is how often we've seen these postural habits occurring in kids and young adults whose spines are still developing.

Symptoms can include;

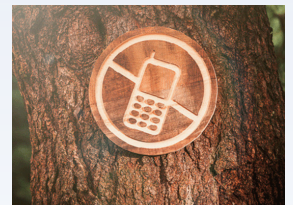
- Neck pain and soreness, ranging from a dull ache to sharper pains on movement.
- Upper back pain ranging from a chronic, nagging pain to muscle spasms.
- Shoulder pain and tightness.
- Shooting pain, aches, tingling and numbness in your arm and hand.

In the long term the body will adjust to this habit and you may see postural changes including an anterior head carriage (head carried forward of the centre of gravity), rounded shoulders and a hunched posture in the upper back.

Prevention is simple. **Use the device less.** There are some great apps out there that will measure the time you spend on the device and how long you spend on each app. This allows you to break down how much time you spend on your phone is necessary and how much time you could cut down on.

Move more. If you are going to spend some time on the device, check the time, decide on a limit and when its up make sure you get up, move around and do some stretches.

Have a digital detox. If you've ever left your phone somewhere, or it's stayed at home, how did you feel? Phone addiction is now taken seriously as a medical condition and it's not just because of text neck. Our reliance on these devices is causing increased anxiety, depression, insomnia and relationship problems. Leave it at home for a day each week, go for a walk without it, see how good it makes you feel to go incommunicado from the wider world for a while.



Sorting out the pain and discomfort associated with text neck is pretty easy, disconnecting from the cause can be harder. If you're suffering with discomfort then get in touch for further advice and if necessary assessment and treatment.

The Courtyard Clinic - Osteopathy, Physiotherapy, Massage Therapy, Podiatry/Chiropody



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