

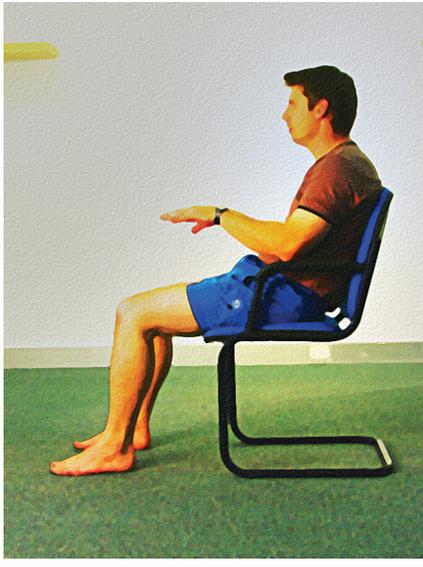
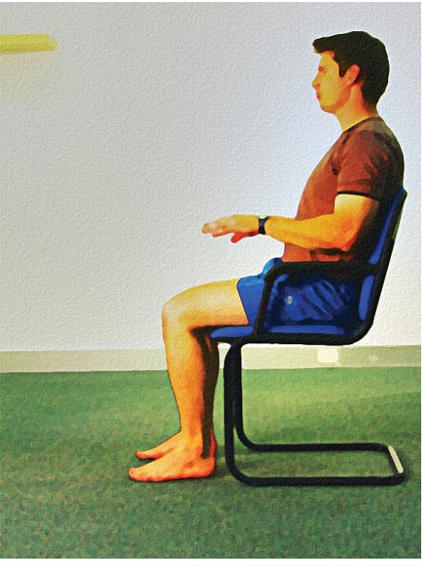
Description

Sitting in a poor posture for a prolonged time can lead to back and neck pain, tiredness and increased risk of injury. These lengthy periods of poor posture are a common risk factor to the development of such injuries as cervicogenic headaches*, cervical nerve root irritations*, neck and thoracic spine (upper back) stiffness, shoulder pathologies and low back pain.

*For information on these injuries, please refer to relevant injury bulletin.

Prevention is better than Cure

1. Try to avoid adopting fixed postures for long periods
2. If possible, take timed rest breaks at regular intervals
3. Rotate tasks so that sustained postures are replaced with a variety of demands

POOR POSTURE	CORRECT POSTURE
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Un-supported lower back• Increased flexion (forward) posture of the upper back• Chin poked out with an increase in neck extension• Shortening of muscles between neck and shoulders/ribs• Feet out away from chair• Knee and hip bend greater than 90 degrees• Hands further away from body increasing load on arms and shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported lower back• Normal upper back (neutral) position• Chin held in neutral head position• Normal resting length of upper back, shoulders and neck muscles• Feet in toward base of chair• Hip and knees approximately 90 degrees bend• Hands held closer to body minimizing load on upper body

Workstation Setup

Work surfaces should be large enough to provide sufficient room for easy handling of documents, papers and equipment.

Ensure your keyboard or writing implements are close by in such a position that correct posture can be achieved and maintained. For example, if your keyboard or mouse is too far away from your office chair, you will find a forward flexed position with your arms/hands away from your body will result. Organise your desk into zones so that there is space close to you for immediate tasks and space for lower priority tasks.



Zone 1: (Closest) Frequently used area eg keyboard

Zone 2: Intermediate zone eg. Phone or document holder

Zone 3: (Furtherest away) Infrequently used items eg filing shelves

If you require frequent exchanges between your desk (written material) and a computer screen, a document holder that keeps papers next to your screen at a similar height has been shown in studies to vastly reduce load to your neck – especially when repeated flexion and elevation is avoided. This simple setup alteration can significantly reduce tension in neck and shoulder muscles by the end of the day.

Treatments

A few simple stretches and strengthening exercises will vastly improve your posture and ability to cope with demands of a seated posture throughout the day. Maintenance of spinal flexibility, core stability, deep abdominal strength and neck strength (particularly deep neck flexor strength) will prevent injury and reduce pain.

For further information on suitable exercise programs and treatment options please subscribe to www.rehabonthenet.com or log on to the injury forum for specific advice.