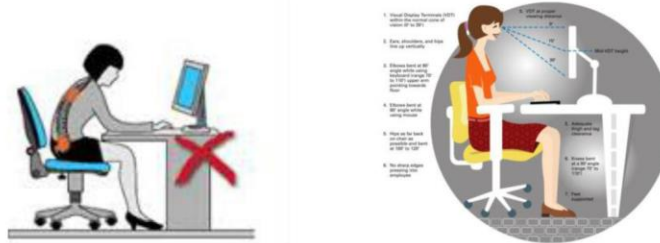


Spinal Wellness for Neck Pain

Managing your neck pain problem requires simple lifestyle changes, most often having to do with undoing bad habits or adapting good ones. These have to do with proper posture and techniques as well as use of special devices (like neck supports) during daily activities so that re-injury to your neck is best prevented. In the workplace, this has to do with proper ERGONOMICS. Keeping this in mind, here are a few pointers that will go a long way in helping you maintain spinal wellness. Remember that frequent re-injury to your neck is the main factor that leads to chronic neck pain.



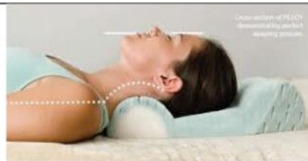
The most common cause of unresolved neck pain: poor posture during prolonged sitting positions, especially at the work place; this places excessive strain on the neck (and back) which in time will lead to chronic pain. Good sitting posture with the aid of ergonomically designed chairs, back cushion supports, head rest extensions, proper height desks and monitors goes a long way in preventing neck pain or re-injury. Frequent neck stretching exercises done correctly during breaks is a must if you have on-going neck pain.



During episodes of neck pain flare-ups, use of aids like a soft neck collar is encouraged in order to provide stability and temporary immobilization. However, prolonged daily use is discouraged as this may lead to weakening of the neck muscles. These may be purchased at any medical supply outlet.



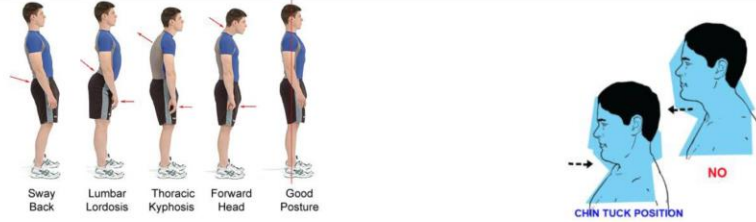
Neck support devices, like neck cushions or head support extensions for chairs will go a long way in promoting good postural alignment during prolonged seated positions (as in air travel, long distance driving, office desk work).



Just like in back pain, a firm mattress is a must during sleep periods to maintain proper spinal alignment. Special pillows with cervical contour features are highly recommended if you have an on-going neck problem. These may be purchased at any medical supply outlet.



Another common cause of neck pain is the improper use of a phone as illustrated above. Use of a hands-free headset is highly encouraged.



The effect of poor posture cannot be underestimated as a primary underlying cause of chronic neck pain; this holds true for back pain as well. A stooped posture with a chin-forward or head-drop position causes cumulative damage to the biomechanics of your neck. A chin-tuck position of your head is encouraged. There are exercises you can do to promote this position. You may need to consult with a Physical Therapist on ways to improve your posture.



Carrying heavy objects in your back, such as when using a backpack, is done correctly by standing erect with the weight strapped firmly to your torso and avoiding the chin-forward or head-drop position.



Positions that involve prolonged overhead activities place undue strain to your neck. This is a common hazard for plumbers, carpenters, construction workers, electricians, auto mechanics, etc. As much as possible, keep your eyesight level with the task at hand. Use of ladders and proper positioning is vital in preventing or managing neck pain.



For those who engage in Sports, improper biomechanics can lead to neck (and back) pain problems or can worsen on-going neck pain. You may need to consult with a Sports Physician, Trainer or Physical Therapist for advice on corrective measures.



The most frequent cause of injury to the neck is from whiplash during a vehicular accident but it also happens commonly from slip and fall injuries. If neck pain persists after an injury or existing neck pain gets worse, consult your doctor the soonest to have it addressed before it becomes a chronic condition.