

Is This ONE Position the MAIN Cause of Your Neck Pain? Try this Simple Test

The most common harmful position of the neck is the forward head posture. This posture may become evident with sitting or with lying on your back. Over time muscles and ligaments get stretched out and pain develops.

Some common causes:

1. Computer Screen is set up too low, or you are using a laptop.
2. You have bifocals or trifocals causing you to tilt your head forward.
3. Your back is slumped which causes your neck to be in a forward head position. Causes include a soft chair or couch. An office chair or car seat with poor design can also promote a slumped back posture.
4. Frequent use of smart phone or I-pad (looking down for prolonged periods).
5. Using too many pillows when sleeping on your back or when watching TV.

Test

In a seated position, assume the forward head posture. While in this position place all ten fingertips of your hand on the top of your head and gently push down. Does this create pain or discomfort? Now do some chin tucks and get your neck in good posture (ears in vertical line with shoulders). Press down again with your fingertips. Any difference? If no pain with either position it is possible the neck will not give you any pain unless it is in the forward head position for a long period of time.

We suggest you document your neck pain levels over a period of a few days. Make note of the frequency, intensity (0-10 scale) and what you are doing at the time. Then make the following changes for a week and reassess your pain levels:

1. Adjust your computer screen height. Most screens are placed too low. Use books or a stand to raise your screen up. The top of the screen should be at least a few inches above your eyes when your back, neck, and head are in good posture. If you are using a laptop computer, it is essential for you to

obtain a separate wireless keyboard. Position the laptop computer as you would a computer screen.

2. If you wear bifocals or trifocals you should purchase a pair of reading glasses designed to be used with your computer screen. Set so you can comfortably view your screen 30-40 inches away. If you do not, you will be constantly putting your head forward and tipping it back to see through your bifocals. It is impossible to obtain good posture in that position and it can cause neck pain and headaches.
3. Use a chair with a firm and upright backrest. If necessary, use a back cushion to provide support to your lower back. If your back is in poor posture, it is likely your neck will be as well. Avoid chairs with flexible backrests. The flexible backrest will usually encourage your back to settle into a "C" position and your neck into a forward head position. If on a couch or recliner place a throw pillow behind your back for support.
4. When using a smart phone or I-pad bring the device up to your eyes using a bent arm method. *SEE PHOTO*
5. When sleeping on your back use only one thin pillow. You can also try a rolled towel in the pillow to give your neck some support. If you want to watch TV, use a bed wedge.

Often one will find a notable improvement in their neck pain levels once the changes are made.