

Sitting Down Syndrome at Work and School

Sitting Down on the Job

Today, the use of computers in virtually every home, school and workplace environment has also given rise to a host of related injuries affecting an unprecedented number of people worldwide.

Without even realizing it, people often sit for hours a day hunched over a desk or in front of a computer, with their heads held forward for extended periods of time. Over time, this unnatural position places significant stress on the head, neck, shoulders and back, causing a condition known as Sitting-Down Syndrome. This condition has prompted an exponential increase in the number of people suffering from a variety of ailments that include:

- Headaches.
- Neck pain.
- Lower-back pain.
- Shoulder pain.
- Elbow pain.
- Wrist pain.

When seated for extended periods of time, muscles contract and eventually become tighter and shorter, placing undue stress on other muscles, joints, ligaments and tendons. In an unconscious effort to relieve the pain caused by this condition, your body compensates in a way that weakens your muscles even further. In turn, this repetitive condition leads to even more pain and suffering unless this cycle is interrupted and corrected.

Whether you're at the office, home or school, the following tips can help alleviate the chronic pain caused by Sitting-Down Syndrome.

Avoiding Pain with Proper Posture and Workstation Use

The following tips were compiled by Wasserman Chiropractic to help reduce the incidence of occupational injuries and loss of workplace productivity as a result of Sitting-Down Syndrome:

HEAD/NECK/BACK/UPPER BODY

- 1) Sit straight up and all the way back in your chair; don't hunch or slump forward or to either side.
- 2) Ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line.
- 3) Lumbar spine supported in a natural, forward curve.
- 4) Upper arms vertical to the floor in any position.
- 5) Use a pillow to support your lower back if you sit in a straight-backed chair.
- 6) Do not sit with a wallet or notepad in a back pocket.

FOREARMS/WRISTS/HANDS

- 1) Adjust chair so elbow tips are level with the center of the keyboard.
- 2) Position forearms, wrists and hands in a straight line; avoid bending hands up/down, or twisting to either side while typing on keyboard.
- 3) Tilt the keyboard to fit your hands and wrists.
- 4) Pull your chair in towards your computer so that the keyboard is positioned at your fingertips; don't 'reach' for the keyboard.
- 5) Forearms to upper arms at a 90° or slightly less angle.
- 6) Avoid letting your forearms press into sharp edges of work surfaces; use wrist and/or forearm rests as needed.
- 7) Keep elbows in towards body. Pivot forearms at elbow joints for side-to-side hand monitors.
- 8) Place mouse pad at same distance as keyboard.
- 9) Use a chair with armrests whenever possible to reduce muscle strain and fatigue.

LEGS/FEET

- 1) Thighs-to-torso at a 90° or greater angle.
- 2) Bend knees at a 90-degree angle, and place feet flat on the floor; use a foot-rest if feet dangle.
- 3) Do not cross your legs or feet while seated.
- 4) Knees lower than hips.
- 5) Chair seat should not press into backs of thighs or crease in back of bent knees.
- 6) Give yourself ample leg space; thighs, lower legs and feet should not press against objects or work surfaces.

EYES

- 1) Adjust the height of your chair to the height of the monitor so that the top of monitor screen is at eye level.
- 2) The center of your viewing surface is slightly below horizon, and an arm's length (1.5-2 feet) away.
- 3) Monitor screen and work surface should be free of sunlight, glare and reflections; direct light from windows or lamps can interfere with your vision.
- 4) Reading/reference material close to the monitor screen and at same distance from eyes.
- 5) Monitor screen clean and free of dust, film and static.

OTHER

- 1) Use sufficient light for reading material.
- 2) Control drafts, excessive heat or a/c, and air pollutants.
- 3) Change sitting positions during the day.
- 4) Take brief body relaxation, deep breathing and stretching breaks at least once per hour.
- 5) Make sure your chair fits your body and works with you, not against you.
- 6) Maintain adequate and responsible exercise, sleep and dietary habits.

While these tips have been proven to be beneficial to those using a computer for at home, work and school, most people with existing cases of Sitting-Down Syndrome require chiropractic care for optimum relief.

At Wasserman Chiropractic, we routinely treat students, business professionals and others suffering from Sitting-Down Syndrome. If you live or work in Northwest Broward County, we invite you to contact us today to discover the many ways in which Wasserman Chiropractic can help eliminate your pain and discomfort, and get you 'back' to work. You'll be glad you did!