

## POSTURE, POSTURE, POSTURE!

Are you currently slumped in your chair, legs crossed looking down at your screen? Bad posture can lead to pain in the neck, back, shoulders, legs and feet, as well as referred pain in the head. It can add to stress and fatigue and in the long term it can cause serious musculoskeletal disorders. Luckily you can change your bad habits and develop good posture if you follow the right advice. First thing to note is that good posture is not just about sitting up straight. In fact it is more about being supported in a good position.

Below are some common causes of bad posture and some associated solutions. Follow these tips to improve your posture and don't forget to take regular breaks and move.

- Do not perch on the front of your seat. Sit back in your chair. If you need to re-arrange your workstation to be comfortable then do so. Do not slouch incorrectly as this results in the loss of the inward curve in the lumbar spine, causing excessive strain on the lumbar discs, instead move your chair closer to the desk and maintain contact between your back and the seat back.
- Your legs should be supported correctly whilst seated. Do not let your feet "dangle", cross your legs, or be tempted to raise your legs so they are supported on the heels or ankles.
- If when sitting with your arms in the correct position and you do not have good foot support, try a footrest. If your knees are higher than your hips, raise the desk and chair height.
- Your shoulders should be in a relaxed position whilst you work. Armrests can help by providing support, however if too high they can cause raised shoulders and if too low cause leaning.

No matter how well the workstation is designed, problems may arise where work organisation is poor or disrupted. Working at a computer often involves few changes in body position. This lack of movement can lead to muscular aches and pains. Something as simple as standing up and walking around your chair or desk can help break up repetitive tasks.

### Neck Exercise

1. Drop head slowly to one side, taking ear towards shoulder until stretch is felt.
2. Hold for slow count of 10.
3. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



### Stretches for back

1. Interlace fingers and lift arms above head, keeping elbows straight.
2. Pressing arms back, slowly stretch to one side.
3. Hold for slow count of 10.
4. Repeat 3 – 5 times to each side.



### Shoulder Stretch Exercise

1. Raise shoulders towards ears until slight tension felt across top of shoulders.
2. Hold for slow count of 10.
3. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



### Back Exercise

1. Hold right arm with left hand just above elbow.
2. Gently push elbow towards left shoulder until stretch is felt.
3. Hold for slow count of 10.
4. Repeat 3 – 5 times to each side.



Short training seminars for industrial/field employees will be taking place at a number of locations during Autumn 2016. These will provide useful advice on back care and posture along with guidance on how to minimise back problems from aches, pains and injuries. If you wish to attend one of these seminars please register your interest by emailing [julie.henderson@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:julie.henderson@nienetworks.co.uk) or telephone 07799867809.

## COMPETITION TIME!

The Gran Fondo will once again tour Northern Ireland and for all cycling enthusiasts, whether you're an experienced cyclist or it's something you're thinking of taking up as part of your exercise regime, we're giving you the chance to win a Force cycling helmet thanks to Brownfield Bike Repairs and Restoration in Bangor.

Simply tell us who won Giro d'Italia 2015?

Send your answer to [Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk) and you could be a winner!



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