



## Work Related Neck Pain

Are you an office worker chained to your desk every day? Do you drive to work in the car? If you have answered yes to both of these questions, you will probably suffer from a painful neck or aching shoulders at some time. Since the advent of the computer, office workers have become less active. Many people work for hours craning their heads forward to look at the computer screen and become so engrossed in their work that they forget to move or change position.

Even worse, people who wear bifocal glasses tend to peer through the lower part of the lenses at the screen and so develop a forward poking chin posture. To prevent neck pain, it is important to have a work station that entirely fits around you, taking into consideration your height and build.

Ergonomics is the means of adapting the work environment to suit the individual needs of the worker, instead of fitting the worker to the working environment. Try to arrange your desk so that you avoid any awkward twisting and turning movements. The screen and keyboard need to be positioned in front of you. If you use the telephone a lot, place it at arms length to avoid over-reaching. A supportive office chair on swivel wheels is a must. Make sure that the back rest moulds neatly into your spine, supporting your lower back.

When sitting in your chair, your hips should be at the same height as your knees with your feet on the floor. In this position, the desk should be at the same level as your elbows, so that your forearms rest easily on the desk. At the Wye Physiotherapy Practice we are able to offer Ergonomic advice to office workers.

Other handy tips to remember are:

Take frequent breaks away from your desk. Stand up and stretch up tall. Walk around the office if possible.

Try to take exercise at lunchtime. Walk around Town at lunchtime instead of sitting in the staff room.

If you work in a large office, use the stairs instead of the lift.

Try to get into the habit of taking exercise when you get home – go for another walk or cycle ride. Maybe try swimming weekly.

Please remember, if you are unaccustomed to exercise, you need to start very gently and slowly build up over the months.

If you have prolonged neck or back pain, it is advisable to contact your Doctor or a Physiotherapist.