

# Help for shoulder and neck pain at work

There are many musculoskeletal conditions that cause neck and shoulder pain, but these can be triggered and aggravated by poor working habits at your desk



## Problem...

### Not moving enough

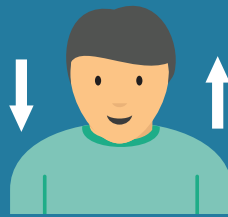
Regardless of how suitable your workstation is, remember to get up, walk around and try some neck and shoulder stretches frequently throughout the day.

## Try this...



### Neck tilt

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



### Shoulder stretch

- Raise shoulders towards ears until slight tension felt across tops of shoulders
- Hold for slow count of 10
- Repeat 3-5 times



### Shoulder roll

- Sit with back supported
- Slowly roll shoulders up and backwards in circular motion
- Repeat 10 times

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## Problem...

### Sitting too low

If you are sitting too low (or your desk is too high), you risk sustained contraction of the shoulder muscles as you lift your arms to use the mouse and keyboard. This contraction reduces blood flow to your tissues, leading to fatigue and discomfort.

## Try this...



**Make sure your arms are parallel to your desk and your gaze is in line with the top of your monitor.**

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## Problem...

### Reaching forward or to the side

Whenever you reach forward or to the side, you increase work in the muscles around the shoulder and neck, which can lead to fatigue and pain.

It's important to work with your upper arms relaxed and close to your body. Make sure your forearm isn't jutting out at an angle to move your mouse around, as this will rotate the humerus outwards in the shoulder joint, creating tension and imbalance if this becomes habitual.

## Try this...



Use a compact keyboard to allow more space to position your mouse

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## Problem...

### Poking chin posture

This is when you're leaning in towards your screen, your back unsupported by the backrest, with the chin pointing forwards. This engages the muscles in the neck, causing tension that reduces blood flow to the head which can cause headaches. If there is pressure on the nerves in the neck then this can cause referred pain in the arms and hands.

## Try this...

Top of the screen level with the eye line

Use zoom controls to help you see

Ask a colleague to remind you if they notice you slumping forwards



Keep your back against the curve of your backrest

Make sure your monitor is an arm's length away

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## Problem...

### Clamping phone between ear and shoulder

A very bad habit commonly seen in offices as people attempt to multitask while on the phone. It causes pain and tension in the neck and shoulders and should be avoided.

## Try this...



- Invest in a headset so you can talk hands-free
- Better yet, invest in a wireless headset so you can move around

Shop headsets at  
[posturite.co.uk/headsets](https://posturite.co.uk/headsets)

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## Problem...

### Repetitive or awkward head movements

Glancing repetitively between your screen and documents laid out on your desk can lead to aches and pains. Avoid placing documents in front of the keyboard, as this will cause you to reach to type, creating tension in the shoulders, upper back and neck.

Using multiple monitors also increases the risk of head movements as you may find yourself turning your head repetitively to view data between the screens.

## Try this...



An adjustable document holder positioned close to the monitor to reduce head movements.



If one screen is used more, place this in front of you with a reference screen as close as possible and in line with it.

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## Problem...

### Incorrect laptop use

You should not use a laptop on its own (without ergonomic equipment) for prolonged periods, especially if you are inputting. The low position of a laptop can encourage you to bend your neck forwards and hunch your shoulders. Use of the touchpad can also create awkward movements, and is not very efficient.

## Try this...

Using an adjustable laptop/tablet stand



Using a detachable mouse and keyboard

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## Problem...

### Overuse of tablets and phones

Touch-screens can encourage poor postures, especially when used for long periods.



## Try this...



Avoid using devices flat on the desk



Limit usage to short bursts



Make sure arm is supported if swiping



Consider using voice input



Switch to a computer for inputting tasks



Adjust settings to reduce blue light in evenings, or use a filter



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## Problem...

### Carrying too much around

If you travel about for work, try not to carry too much weight in your bag as this can affect your shoulders.

## Try this...



- Regularly clear out your bag to get rid of excess weight
- Take rest breaks
- Use an ergonomic backpack
- Avoid shoulder bags