



Avoiding Pain While Texting

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As technology continues to evolve rapidly, we are constantly gaining new ways to become connected in an instant. Unfortunately, we also can begin to experience new aches and pains associated with these forms of technology. The beginning of the Nintendo Wii brought plenty of aches and pains from games that seem simple, such as bowling! Who knew that you could make your body sore from waving a little controller around while “bowling” with a 7 year old!

Texting has grown quickly in popularity as the communication of choice, especially in teenagers and young adults. Along with the increased texting, we have seen an increase in headache and neck pain in younger people. There are several factors that increase the risk for developing pain while texting. First of all, most people are not aware of their posture while they are sending out these brief messages. All too often, the phone is held in one’s lap while they are typing out their replies. This forces a person to slouch forward and bend the head downward with their arms held out in front of them. This position puts extra strain on the muscles of the upper back, neck, and into the base of the skull. Second, if people are texting on tiny little phones in poor lighting this can create eye strain for even the best pair of eyes. All of these factors can lead to a nagging, bothersome headache and/or neck soreness.

How can we avoid the headache of texting? Just being aware of your own posture while texting is probably the best place to start. Avoid the habit of leaning forward and looking straight down into your lap while typing. Hold the phone in front of you so that you can sit up straight with your head looking forward instead of downward.

If you have already aggravated the neck muscles from hours of texting, then you could try a few home management tips:

- Use ice at the base of the skull, place the ice pack in a towel and lay flat on your back with the ice in place for 15 minutes
- While laying on your back with the ice, try tucking your chin in and flattening your spine against the ground. Hold for 5 seconds and release, do 10-15 repetitions of these.
- Use a tennis ball to apply pressure to sore areas throughout the upper back/neck while leaning against the wall. It is a great way to massage the area.

If home management of your symptoms is not working well, contact your local Physical Therapist! We can evaluate your symptoms and determine if there are other underlying issues that need to be addressed, and treat your headaches and neck pain.