

## How to head off a pain in the neck

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(HealthDay)—Neck pain can sneak up on you over time. While it can be caused by an accident or injury, your everyday posture and body mechanics can also be to blame, from the way you carry a shoulder bag,

cradle your phone while multitasking or sit at your desk. These tips will help you better protect your neck.

Hold gadgets and reading materials at eye level. Constantly looking down at your [cellphone](#) or tablet, or even a magazine, can tax the muscles in your neck. The same is true for your computer screen. When texting on your cellphone, avoid holding it at chest level or in your lap. Both positions could place your neck in an unnatural position. There's even a name for it: text neck.

If you're on the phone a lot, use a headset. Avoid the urge to hold your phone between your head and a shoulder.

Move often throughout the day. This is especially important if you have a desk job. Set reminders on your smartwatch to get up every hour and walk for at least two minutes.

While most people under age 60 should have an [eye exam](#) at least every two years, if you're having difficulty seeing or if you already wear glasses or [contact lenses](#), check in yearly with your eye doctor. If you're straining to see, you're straining your neck as well as your eyes.

Getting a good night's sleep is an important prevention step, but your sleep position counts, too. Pare back on the number of pillows you use because sleeping with your head elevated can affect your neck. Also resist sleeping on your stomach because it, too, puts your [neck](#) out of alignment.

**More information:** The U.S. National Institutes of Health has tips on [achieving better posture](#) to prevent neck and back pain.

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