

'POSTURING-UP' AT THE WORK STATION

By Dr. Derek Conte

Have you ever looked around you and noticed the number of people, young and old, who have a stooped-over posture? As a chiropractor, I am particularly amazed at the youngsters I see walking around with their heads forward and their shoulders rounded. I think suspect it has to do with the amount of time we spend sedentarily sitting at the computer or PlayStation to find entertainment through the virtual world of our computers. Can the impact of this lifestyle be affecting the architecture of our bodies?

We may excuse the stooped frames of the elderly as the logical result of a lifetime's struggle against gravity, but I see many younger people of 50 or 60, even 15 or 20, hunched over and looking much older than their years. While there are many things that could cause this stooped posture, such as an old auto accident, compression fractures of the thoracic vertebrae, or a bulging disc, these are not nearly as common as poor ergonomics at the workstation.

Upon my examination, these spines are characterized by great stiffness and pain, loss of cervical range of motion, often accompanied by some degree of radiating pain, numbness, tingling and weakness in the arms and hands. The chest muscles are extremely tight and sensitive to pressure. I ask the patient to close their eyes and imagine they are at the computer. Always the head is forward and down, the spine is slumped into a "C-Shape" and the arms out in front, held high, to reach the keyboard. No wonder! I point this out and show them a better way. Here it is:

First, slide forward on the chair until

the bones of the buttocks are taking all the weight. The thighs should slope slightly downward toward the floor, the feet under the chair. Then, rock the pelvis forward to bring the belly-button forward. The head will arc back on top of the body, restoring the cervical and lumbar curves. Next, raise the monitor to be level with your eyes and directly in front of you (use telephone books, if you have to!). Finally, position the keyboard down close to your belly button so your upper arms are vertical and the shoulders are relaxed. It should not be necessary to tense the body at all to do this.



Dr. Derek Conte

The only parts that need to move are your lower arms and hands. Don't forget to position the monitor head-on. Twisting your neck all day invites a big problem. For the tight chest muscles, do stretches several times a day in a doorway. Chiropractic adjustments should also be made to increase range of motion and remove nerve irritation. It only takes a few visits and patients are thrilled with the results. Try it. You'll love it!

Dr. Derek Conte is co-founder of Chiropractic Specialists on Concord Rd. in Smyrna. For questions, call: 404-784-6008 or go to Facebook: Chiropractor Smyrna Ga | Derek Conte DC

The June issue of
The Bright Side will be
published June 6, 2011
Deadline: May 23, 2011
news@brightsidecobb.com
Twitter @brightsidecobb