



## Using Technology Safely

Mobile devices such as cell phones, iPads, laptops and electronic readers have made our lives more convenient. In today's society, many people fear giving up their cell phones even for a few hours. While this makes it easier to accomplish tasks without being tethered to an office, this has also increased the amount of time we spend using these devices, which can adversely affect our health.

Before these advances in technology, our bodies moved much more, but now we slump over small screens often for long periods with little change in position. You don't have to sacrifice modern conveniences for your health, but you need to know how to minimize the risks.

### Protect Yourself

Good posture is important to your health. When you bend forward to watch electronic devices like your cell phone, you increase pressure on your discs and increase loads on muscles. The faulty forward position also happens when you bend forward to look down at a computer or laptop. Always remember to:

- Sit upright with your ears over your shoulders.
- Look down with your eyes, and if you wear bifocals or glasses, make sure you also can scan the entire screen without moving your head.
- Never pinch the phone between your ear and shoulder. Use a headset to reduce shoulder strain.
- When sitting at a device, make sure your feet are firmly flat on the floor or footrest with your knees lower than your hips.

- Make sure you can use the device without reaching.
- Take breaks! Get up and move around.

### Prevent Elbow Injuries

The ulnar nerve wraps around the inside of your elbow and is commonly called the funny bone. Keeping elbows bent can compress the ulnar nerve resulting in pain, numbness, tingling or muscle weakness. The nerve is easily damaged by external pressure, so keep safe by minimizing the time you bend your elbows to hold the phone or device up to your face.

### See Your Chiropractic Physician

If you find yourself in pain despite your best efforts, your doctor of chiropractic can treat any injuries and provide additional advice on using technology safely.

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For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find a doctor of chiropractic near you, visit [www.HandsDownBetter.org](http://www.HandsDownBetter.org).

### Reference:

*Easy Ergonomics for Desktop Computer Users*, prepared by Cal/OSHA Consultation Services, Research and Education Unit, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, California Department of Industrial Relations.



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