



# Text-Neck Guide



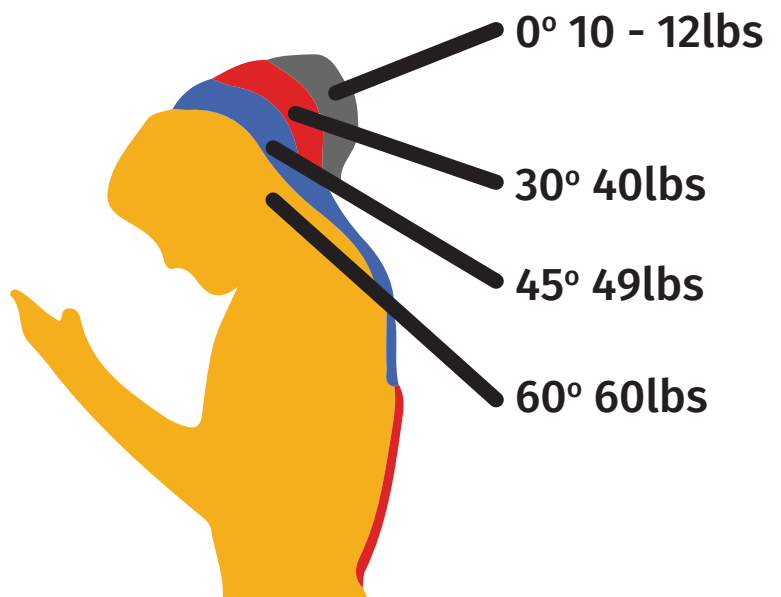
ell phone use is dramatically on the rise. Did you know that the average smart phone user spends an average of 2-4 hours each day with his or her head dropped down? Between reading e-mails, sending texts, and checking social media sites, mobile device users are spending a good chunk of their day with their heads tilted down staring at a screen.

As a result, cases of “text-neck”, which can cause neck pain, arm pain, upper back pain, numbness, headaches, etc. are on the rise.

The issue is that as your head leans forward, it places additional weight on your spine. The more your head tilts forward, the greater this effective weight on your spine.

A 15-degree angle, for example, places an additional 27 pounds of weight on your spine, while a 60-degree angle places an additional 60 pounds of weight on your spine. (The weight of an average 7 year old).

Surrounding tissues stretch, becoming sore and inflamed; muscles stretch; and nerves pinch.



***It's not a pretty picture.***

Text-Neck specifically refers to a constellation of different injuries and pain types that are sustained from looking down at wireless devices to often and for too long.

Unless you've been living in a cave without Wifi, I don't need to tell you that cell phone use is dramatically on the rise.

Take a trip to your local Starbucks, or the mall, or even the freeway, and you'll see a common picture. People with their heads down—and on the phone.

Outside of being anti-social and dangerous, it's affecting our posture, causing pain and possible long-term problems.

# What Are the Signs and Symptoms Associated with Text Neck?

■ **Pain:** The upper part of the spine is typically curved in order to ensure that the nerves have plenty of space through the neck and out into the body. However, constantly looking down at a phone or tablet crunches down all of that extra space, compressing the nerves. This will inevitably generate pain and discomfort. Repeated irritation, misalignment, muscle spasms, or tension can cause neck pain, headaches, pain that radiates down to the fingertips.

■ **Misalignment:** In some cases, text neck can actually reverse the neck's natural curve, causing misalignment. Loss of the natural curvature of the spine can lead to a host of other problems, leading to early wear and tear and degeneration.

■ **Ligament creep:** Ligaments that hold bones together are elongated as a result of prolonged, long-term tension. When the ligaments stretch out, they become much looser, making them less effective at holding the vertebrae in place. This causes the vertebra to move around more than usual, which negatively affects the discs, the facet joints and causes problems.

■ **Herniated Discs:** All that extra weight on the neck can do a lot of damage to the spine, leading to herniated discs. "It's a lot of load, an amazing amount of weight to be carrying around on your neck." Explained Dr Kenneth K. Hansraj, MD, chief of spine surgery at New York Spine Surgery and Rehabilitative Medicine. "When you have such aggressive stressors on the neck, you get wear and tear on the spine. You can develop tears within the disc, or even get a slipped or herniated disc."



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The forward head posture can be affected by too much sitting and misalignment in the pelvis, which cause a chain reaction of muscle and tissue imbalances that makes the head go forward.

# Can Text Neck Do Long Term Damage?

Medical and Chiropractic professionals are concerned that text-neck could actually have long-term implications. Text-neck is associated with poor posture, which has been linked to headaches, neurological issues, heart disease, and depression. Yet another study found that this kind of poor posture can reduce lung capacity by a staggering 30 percent.



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It increases the risk of developing arthritis, spinal degeneration, disc issues, neck pain, arm pain, shoulder blade pain, and numbness and can lead to chronic neck pain. Now, if that wasn't enough. Besides the pain and posture affects, "text-neck" can also make you look 10 years older.

What! Text Neck Can Make Me Look 10 years Older?

***"Oh, so now I have your attention!"***

As Dr. Lancer, a dermatologist in Beverly Hills, succinctly puts it, "If you are always looking down your are going to quickly ruin your neck muscles." Yes, ladies, electronic devices can cause the skin on your neck to sag.

Think of the muscles on the front of your neck like the wires on a suspension bridge (Golden Gate Bridge). Constantly looking down causes those wires to stay loose, preventing them from ever getting toned. It's like a chain reaction. The muscles stay loose, which keeps the skin on top of the muscles loose, which makes them look all crinkly and wrinkly.

And, unfortunately, Dr. Lance is seeing more and more people coming into his office complaining of “sagging neck skin”. Some of them are younger than 40.

*We can change our habits: keep our spine healthier!*

## **I How Can You Treat The Symptoms Of Text-Neck?**

If you are having neck pain, upper back pain or headaches and you feel the culprit is text neck; your best bet is to see a chiropractor.

Chiropractic treatments have been shown to help increase range of motion and reduce fixation of the vertebral structures and surrounding tissues.

## **I How Can You Prevent Text Neck?**

Make this easy and just “reducing the amount of time you text,” “pay attention to your posture,” “Sit upright.”

It doesn't have to be an all or nothing proposition, nor do you have to do it all at once. Instead, try reducing your text time by 20 percent each day. Stop texting at night or during meals. You can even designate text-free zones, such as the dining room, as well as text-free hours, say between 4pm and 6pm. You might be surprised how nice it is to “disconnect”. Also think of how long we are sitting at our computers and tablets. Also think of how long we are sitting at our computers and tablets.

In short, be creative with your text/computer time. It won't only save you from an aching and saggy neck, it just might improve the quality of your social life.

***It is far better to prevent text neck than to treat it.***

Especially in the case of children and adolescents, developing healthy mobile device habits now can mean significantly less pain and misery down the line. Luckily, it is relatively easy to do.



# What to do?

- Instead of tilting your chin down try raising your mobile device up, close to eye level.

Keep your elbows to your side as you lift your smart phones up.

Feels odd at first but becomes habit quickly. You can even download an app to keep an eye on your activity!

- Keep this in mind when you are sitting in a chair or car as well.

Bring the screen to eye level so your head is not slouched forward or too high.

This way, you don't have to be in a forward-head posture for a prolonged period of time.

- Always use a back support pillow when sitting or driving.

By supporting the low back, the head and neck will move back over the shoulders.

- When using a tablet buy a case that allows you to prop up the tablet on a table.
- Keep computer monitors eye level.
- Use a pillow under laptops.
- Use-standing workstations.



# So What is Good Posture?

...All you need to do is Straighten Up and Look Forward. Sort of..

## **Good Posture: 1,2,3**

1. First of all stick your buttocks out (yes we do not tuck our pelvis) this increases the proper curve of the low back
2. Second, do a chin tuck gently draw your chin and head back like you are making a double chin. (do not tilt your head in any direction)
3. Third, relax 10-20% in this position. Walk around and try not to be “robot like”, you will feel “stiff” at first, but very soon you will be standing tall and with good posture.

If you are sitting slouched with the low back rounded, it is not possible to correct the posture of the neck.

To sit correctly maintain the natural hollow (lordosis) that is present in your low back while standing.

It is helpful to use a “lumbar roll” in the small of your back.

McKenzie has a good slim-line lumbar-support cushion, which attaches to most chairs, and can be helpful.

Available on Amazon.



## **I Exercises:**

The key is to come up with a comprehensive treatment plan that involves both pain relief and muscle strengthening, along with changes to your habits.

### **■ Shoulder Blade Squeezes:**

Sit up straight in a chair. Your neck should be long and your legs should be at a 90-degree angle.

Drop your shoulders, if tension has caused them to creep closer to your ears. Let your arms hang to your sides.

Squeeze your shoulder blades together, as though you are trying to get them to touch. Hold this for 3 seconds. Slowly release to a relaxed position. Repeat this exercise 10 times, moving in a controlled manner. Increase to holding for 10 seconds and then to doing 2 to 3 sets per day as you get stronger.

The goal of this exercise is to improve muscle strength in your shoulders so that you can raise your chest. It is difficult to have good head posture if your head is not supported by your chest and shoulders. Look down at your shoulders frequently throughout the day. If they are forward from your chest, do a few shoulder squeezes to set them in the right place. You can Google “Rhomboid exercises”, and get more exercises.

### **■ Chin Tuck:**

Chin tucks strengthen the neck muscles and help you pull your head back into alignment.

How to: Sit up tall in a chair and keep your chin parallel to the floor. Without tilting your head in any direction, gently draw your head and chin back, like you’re making a double chin. Tuck in your chin to the point where the voice changes pitch (your voice will start to sound “funny”). At that point, release the chin slightly so the voice clears and stay in position!

Be careful not to jam your head back. You should feel a stretch along the back of the neck. Release your chin forward. Relax and repeat. You can perform throughout the day. You can choose your start position, whether it is sitting or standing.



### ■ Chin Tuck Advanced:

Stand against a wall with a small pillow at your mid-back. Move your head back to touch the wall. Hold for count of 3, do 20-25 reps.

### ■ Neck Rotations:

Neck Rotations – look gently to the left and right, 10 times on each side. Try to perform these every hour throughout the day.

### ■ Chin Nods:

Tuck the chin in as far as you can (making a double or triple chin) holding that position for 3 seconds, and then tip the head back as far as you can without releasing the chin tuck and hold for another 3 seconds. Repeat this 2-3x / “set” and perform this multiple times per day.

During this exercise, remember that you are not trying to increase the arc of your neck. You are trying to pivot your head backward in a natural and correct manner. People who have had forward head posture for an extended period of time may find this very difficult to do in the beginning.

### ■ Lengthening the Neck:

Standing touch the back of your head to the wall then pretend that there is a string going from the base of your neck to the top of your head.

Pull that string up from the top creating a longer neck, focus on creating upward length in the back of the neck. (You can think of pulling your hair from the crown of your head toward the ceiling.)

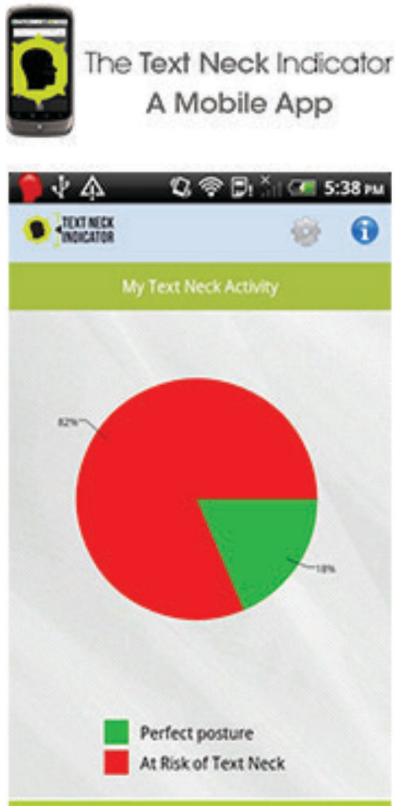
### ■ Neck Meditation:

Lay on your back on a bed so that the edge of the bed is at the middle of the neck and head is dangling off the bed. Take a tightly rolled up towel (a hand size towel works well) and place it under the neck so that is resting on the edge of the bed so that your head can fall back towards the floor.

Take some deep breaths and concentrate on relaxing all your neck muscles. Periodically, slowly rotate your head left to right, right to left, and “feel” the different muscles stretch as you do this.

Remember, the posture you have now took years to develop, so it will take time and practice to restore good posture.

## Wondering how you can keep your posture in check while you are using your mobile device?



*Luckily, there is an app!*

Florida chiropractor Dean L. Fishman has created an app called Text Neck for Android, which offers immediate real-time feedback regarding posture by indicating whether you are standing in a correct position or not via a red or green light.

Monitoring good posture is a lifetime commitment.

With a little effort and a chiropractor on your health care team, you can be assured a future doing things you love to do, rather than suffering from damage and degeneration poor posture can bring.

# Meet Dr. Debra Yerman, D.C

With over 35 years of experience, Dr. Debra Yerman, D.C. has built a reputation for insightful and compassionate health care, providing advanced treatments that are effective, long lasting, and uniquely designed to the specific needs of her patients.

Dr. Yerman uses treatments that are widely accepted and has a goal to treat patients the least amount of times possible.

Treatments include the Impulse IQ, Laser Therapy, as well as the signature Activator Method Technique. The Activator Method Technique is a gentle, low-force program of chiropractic care that has been safely used to benefit people with a wide range of health problems—without drugs or surgery!



Because Dr. “Deb” is mainstream, she works hand-in-hand with her colleagues in the medical community. Dr. Yerman gives and receives referrals from medical doctors all the time because her only goal is to give the patient (you) exactly what you want and is best for you.

Recognizing that women have specific healthcare needs, Yerman Chiropractic also specializes in providing focused chiropractic care to help women improve comfort, maximize physical performance, and experience a full quality of life. Dr. Yerman helps women through physical stressors such as pregnancy, chest pain, carpal tunnel, sciatica, pelvic floor dysfunction, low back pain, hip pain and more. She’ll even assist you with proper biomechanics as you train for your next sporting event.

At Yerman Chiropractic there is only one goal: reduce patient pain and offer relief in the fewest visits possible. In the words of Dr. Yerman, “As much as we love you, we want you in and out of our office as soon as possible, and back to the healthy life you deserve.”

Discover for yourself the power of good health and a pain-free life.

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*Your Back Is In Good Hands*