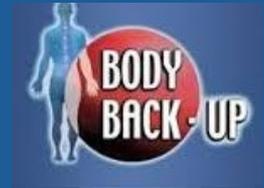


Laptop Alert

tips & techniques for a healthier back



Osteopathy Health & Sports Injury Clinic

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Are Laptops harmless?

- Laptop computers tend to be regarded by their users as portable, convenient and harmless.
- Convenient they may be but experts are pointing increasingly to health problems connected with their use.



■ Osteopath Robin Lansman, who sees patients in his clinics at Maidenhead and London, with problems stemming from laptop use, says:

Laptops encourage people to work in a bad posture

- Indeed the very name 'laptop' implies that you can use it in a seated position on your lap, comfortably and safely.
- But this is near to impossible because of the position of the screen relative to the keyboard.
- You cannot readily get your head, shoulders and Back into a useful plane – to take the strain off the postural supportive muscles.

The problem with Laptops

- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 suggest keyboard users adjust the position of their workstation so that their arms work approximately horizontal and their eyes are at the same height as the top of the VDU casing.
- Raising the screen by placing it on a platform, for example, may correct the head and neck alignment but then the arms and wrists will still be at an uncomfortable angle.
- Those doing long stints in front of their notebook are at risk of developing musculo-skeletal strains, pains and possibly longer-term problems, including chronic upper-limb disorders & RSI



- You can attach a separate monitor and keyboard – but this practice will somewhat detract from the convenience factor!
- Laptop keyboards are usually more cramped than the standard size and there is always the strain of carrying it around. The carrying case includes a mains power adapter, extra batteries, often on one shoulder.

Our tips to reduce risks

- The best way to use a laptop while travelling, or otherwise out of the office, is intermittently.
- At home or at work, attach a full size keyboard while raising the screen to an appropriate height.
- Change posture frequently when using a laptop.
- Get up, move around and stretch at regular intervals.
- If the situation requires you to use a laptop on your lap, raise it up to a better height with the aid of a book, pillows, or rolled up coat.
- If you cannot find a chair with adequate back support, put a cushion or rolled up coat or jumper into the hollow of your back to add support. Inflatable travel cushions are useful for this purpose.
- Place the keyboard directly in front of you, and leave room on the table, if possible, to rest your wrists.
- Adjust the seat so that your arms are level with the table top.
- To ease eye strain, experiment with larger on-screen font sizes, or zoom in to make text larger and easier to see.
- Adjust brightness and contrast settings as light conditions change.
- Consider a more ergonomically friendly way of carrying your laptop gear around. Heavy weight on one side can cause muscle strain, use two cases or a Backpack – even a case on wheels.

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