

Is home working giving you a headache?

Some of us are fortunate to have a home office, that exclusive space for work and work alone, a childfree zone, with a fancy multiple screen set up, and a chair that wouldn't have been out of place at NASA.

However the reality of the situation is most of us are juggling homeschooling, sharing the dining table, with our children (perhaps the messiest of humans) or spending our days sat on the sofa with a laptop precariously balanced upon our knees. It is therefore no surprise that we find ourselves with a headache.

Prolonged sitting has never been a good idea, and has long been associated with significant health implications, sluggish productivity, slow metabolism, and painful stiffness and tightness in your upper back and neck.

When you spend a day typing on a computer, it is your neck and shoulder muscles that bare the strain, they get tense, and as you tire, you stoop to look closer at the screen, increasing the load further on your neck and shoulders, and causing that all familiar blurred vision.

Occupational health teams, are trained to counter act the effects of postural stress, with detailed ergonomic assessments. Often providing practical solutions, and postural and conditional advice to remedy a situation, for the comfort of a user.

However I think it is safe to say, no-one is comfortable right now! Our screens are at the wrong height, our mouse mat is non-existent, and we have discovered the dining chairs we find comfortable for the family meal, are not so great for a 8 hr working day.

So what do we do?

A fascinating study was published in the Journal of Human Sport and Exercise in 2019, the study focused on a Greek prison, and compared the effects of sedentary behaviour on a group of prisoners who were confined for long periods of time.

The prisoners who took part in daily exercise reported better self esteem, and greater quality of life. So whilst we are not sentenced to a life of home working, when in lock-down... we must...do as the greeks do!

Firstly we must move more! I know I know, we can't go out... but we can move around the house, after all any activity is better than none.

Each time we answer the phone, stand up, walk and talk. Need the toilet? Go to the upstairs toilet instead of the downstairs toilet. Fancy a cuppa? Don't stand next to the kettle watching it boil! Use this time to complete your daily 'Stay at home Squats' or the 'Burpees Boredom Busters.' See how I squeezed that in! 😊

According to World Health Organization 2020 Global Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour, it takes 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week; to counter sitting at a desk all day. A second study, suggests up to 40 minutes of 'moderate' exercise every day is needed to correct 10hours of sitting still. British Medical Journal

Just think how many Squats you could do in 40mins!

However in all seriousness, we need to keep moving, and here are some useful links to help us lockdown that lockdown headache.

[NHS – Flexibility exercises](#)

[Chartered Society of Physiotherapists -Working at home exercises](#)

I've also included a link to an exercise I personally recommend 'Reverse Snow Angels.' This exercise is perfect for working the upper back, and reawakening the muscles that have become tightened and sore.



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