

## ERGONOMIC ADVICE FOR CHILD COMPUTER USE

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### **Why chiropractic?**

With respect to children seeing chiropractors, it is true that it is on the increase. However, for some decades, the chiropractic degree has incorporated paediatric components. The developing paediatric spine is equally, if not increasingly, susceptible to dysfunction and injury. Internet usage is rapidly increasing. Parents are turning away from drug and surgical solutions for chronic childhood problems, or finding that the future of the child's health care will be a *complimentary* approach incorporating medicine, chiropractic, naturopathy, nutrition, massage, etc. That is, a holistic approach.

### **Children respond well to chiropractic because:**

- \* it is gentle
- \* it is drug free
- \* they are dynamic in their healing ability
- \* quite often the hidden spinal problem has not been diagnosed, or missed
- \* the spine is responsible for more childhood conditions than we give credit for. This is reflected in world-wide studies on colic, headache, and asthma. *More research* is needed to inform the public and other health professions.
- \* more and more people are going online and using the computer for study, work and on the internet. This means children are also susceptible to increased repetitive, postural, and sedentary injury.

### **What Is Ergonomics?**

Ergonomics is the study of how people fit in their work or study environment. This includes how children adapt to the use of computers in daily activity.

Chiropractic addresses the issue of computer related injuries with:

- 1 corrective adjustment of the spine and joints
- 2 prevention by advice on do's and don't's
- 3 exercise to strengthen the body
- 4 referral where necessary

### **What Types of Disorders Are Associated with Computer Use?**

- \* vertebral subluxation (poor spinal joint function)
- \* Neck/shoulder tension
- \* Headache
- \* Tendinitis of the wrist & forearm
- \* Carpal tunnel syndrome
- \* Mid back/shoulder blade pain
- \* Lower back pain
- \* Sciatica

Neuro-musculo-skeletal injuries cost Australians more money per year than cancer treatment. Most of these cases are due to "repetitive strain" from overuse syndromes. The human body was not meant to

stay in one, constrained position for prolonged periods of time. It requires regular motion and activity to maintain normal circulation and to keep muscles relaxed. The result of prolonged static postural strain is fatigue in the muscles and eventually joint, nerve, or disc injury. The pain may start suddenly or gradually, but the problem was inevitably "brewing" for months, years or even decades!

## **The Computer Station Checklist**

### **Chair**

- \* Is your seat height adjustable?
- \* Are your feet firmly on the floor?
- \* Are hips at the same level as your knees?
- \* Is there a good lumbar support?
- \* Do you have arm rests?

### **Desk/Computer**

- \* Is your desk or keyboard at a height where your wrists are not bent?
- \* are your elbows flexed 90 degrees?
- \* are your shoulders relaxed, not "shrugged"?
- \* Is the center of your monitor at nose level?
- \* Is there glare on your computer screen?
- \* Do you have a document holder?
- \* Do you have a headset?

### **What Can I Do?**

**Apart from seeing your chiropractor for a check up for prevention...**

#### **Micro-Breaks**

It is essential to break the cycle of repetitive strain, muscle fatigue, and pain. To do this we should recharge our muscles and take strain off our joints and discs every 20 minutes. Even if just for 10-30 seconds!

Also:

- \* Chin tucks
- \* Shoulder blade squeezes & rolls
- \* Standing reach upwards
- \* Take a walk
- \* Take a deep breath, and let it go!

Contact the Chiropractors Association of Australia NSW on 02 4722 6811 or browse [www.caa.org.au](http://www.caa.org.au)

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Adapted from *Craig Liebenson, DC*

*Los Angeles, California, published in "Dynamic Chiropractic", online at: <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/14/20/04.html>*

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