

Cascade Quarterly News

SITTING

sitting on the job

As the workforce has shifted from factories to offices, the incidence of back pain has increased dramatically.

Researchers blame this increase on one simple activity that we do all the time – sitting.

Our bodies were not designed to sit for long periods of time. We were made to move!

Almost everyone who sits for long periods of time will develop back pain, even with the use of an ergonomic chair. It's not uncommon to develop other problems as well.

Surveys of office workers indicate that about half of all employees

have frequent pain or stiffness in their necks and shoulders. Repetitive strain injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome are becoming more common and about 10% of keyboard users experience wrist pain or discomfort. Who would have thought that sitting could wreak such havoc on your body?

Your body needs movement to operate effectively. If you have a sedentary lifestyle or sit for most of the day, your body is going to start complaining. You have to move!

When your muscles contract, they are assisting the flow of blood and lymph fluid

through your body. The muscles act as a pump. If they don't contract regularly the blood in your extremities pools and you may get swelling of your feet and hands or those parts may just feel cold because the blood circulation is insufficient.

When you sit for long periods of time certain postural muscles, like your shoulder muscles, become overworked. These will tend to become short and tight from overuse whereas other muscles like your gluteals, abdominal and mid-back muscles, will become weak and atrophy.

"Our bodies were not made to sit for long periods of time. We were made to move!"

microbreak



Lean back in your chair and stretch your arms up and your legs out. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Then do circles with your ankles and wrists. Continue to reach up and back, close your eyes, smile, breathe in deeply and out slowly several times.

In the short time it takes to perform this micro break, you have released the lock of your visual and mental tasks, stretched away

muscle tension built up in your hips, spine, and arms and refreshed your body with extra oxygen by expanding your rib cage. You also improved your posture as well as the circulation of blood through your legs and arms. All this in less than 30 seconds!

Caution: Before trying this micro-break, be sure to check your chair for stability so that you don't tip over.

“Surveys indicate that almost half of all office workers have frequent pain or stiffness in their necks and shoulders”

help for the deskbound

If you are stuck behind a desk all day, there are a number of things you can do to keep your body healthy.

Make sure you're using the chair to support your body. For example, most people don't use the backrest properly to support the low back. As they sit down they aim their bottom at the middle of the seat. Then to reach the backrest they slouch backwards. Are you guilty of this? If you are, start aiming your sit bones toward the back edge of the chair as you sit down.

It's very important to take frequent breaks.

Consider this study: Researchers had subjects sit in chairs as they measured tension in their back muscles. After about twenty minutes of sitting, their back muscles started spontaneously tensing up even though the chairs were adjusted to completely support their backs!

Taking breaks will keep your muscles from tightening up.

Use the 20/20 rule: Take a twenty second break at least every twenty minutes. Use these “micro-breaks” to stand up, stretch out and take a couple of deep breaths.

If possible vary the tasks you do throughout the day so that you don't work at one single activity for too long. For example, if your job involves typing and filing, alternate the tasks every half-hour.

Get a regular massage to help you get rid of accumulated tension, stretch out overworked and tight muscles to get your circulation going.

Lastly, be sure to **exercise regularly.** It is vitally important that you balance your inactivity with activity. Try some form of gentle aerobics like swimming, hiking or biking.

healthy neck checklist

□ **Have you had your eyes checked lately?**

If your eyesight is not 100% you may be straining not only your eyes, but your neck and shoulders. Problems are not always obvious, so make an appointment for a thorough eye examination.

□ **Do you slouch?**

When you slouch, your head tilts back to see your work properly. This shortens your neck muscles, wears down the joints in your neck and may even compress the nerves that go to your arms.

□ **Do you have adequate support for your arms and wrists?** Armrests will take the stress off your shoulder muscles which normally carry the weight of your shoulder girdle and arms. Also consider using a wrist support.

□ **Do you hold the phone between your ear and shoulder?**

This type of repetitive posture can be a cause of trigger points (tight and irritated areas) in muscles, which can cause a lot of discomfort. If you spend a lot of time on the telephone, invest in a headset.

□ **Is your work in front of you?**

If you spend most of your day looking at a computer screen, make sure it's in front of you and not positioned to the side so that you have to turn your head to see it.

□ **Do you use a document holder?**

Document holders keep your papers next to your computer screen so that you don't have to twist your neck around trying to look at printed material that's lying flat on the desk.

□ **Do you take frequent breaks?** Take frequent short breaks. It's the best thing you can do to prevent

your muscles from tightening up.

□ **Do you carry a heavy briefcase or purse?**

Change sides frequently. Better yet, center the weight over both shoulders by using a knapsack.

□ **Is it time for a stress check?**

Stress is a part of life. How we respond to stress, however, can vary greatly. We can choose to manage our stress in either healthy or unhealthy ways. Lifestyle choices are key to wellness when it comes to stress management. Get creative in finding healthy ways to foster stress reduction!

□ **Do you breathe?**

Proper breathing will help to stop your shoulders and neck muscles from tensing up. Make a point to take deep, full, belly breaths at various times during your workday.



Do you get headaches, shoulder pain, or neck pain at work? If you do, here's a short checklist that might help you uncover some of the causes.





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If you have specific health concerns consult your medical doctor.

The information in this newsletter is educational only and is not intended to replace the advice of your personal health care providers.

About Cascade Massage Therapy

My Approach

I bring over 12 years of bodywork experience and education to the massage table! I offer you diverse and comprehensive massage therapy sessions. Your treatment goals are foremost and your needs will be heard and addressed. I utilize both traditional and alternative treatment techniques, and recommend self care tips and exercise options that evolve with your individual healing process.

My intention is to be a facilitator in the cascade of your healing process and health maintenance. I believe that within the human body is the desire and ability to be well, and through bodywork, I serve to act as a catalyst for this process.

This is your time - I encourage you to enjoy the stillness of your session, and sense the changes occurring in your body while we work - you don't need to be entertaining or start a conversation; that being said, please recognize that I do not read minds. I expect my clients to participate in his or her experience and give feedback when there is any discomfort during the treatment.



Cascade Massage Therapy is focused on education and prevention. It is important that you know what you can do to help prevent stress, tension, and pain when you are not with me. I allow for time at the end of our session to converse, suggest self care tips and exercises that would be beneficial for you, and answer any questions that you may have.

I believe that prolonged stress, whether environmental, physical or emotional is a primary factor in dis-ease and a true obstacle to healing. Therefore, ***I welcome you to a peace-filled and relaxing environment where you can experience relief from pain and tension.***

Contact Me

To learn more about my work, I invite you to visit my website at :
www.cascademassagetherapy.com

You are welcome to call me at **250-550-4727** for a **free 10 minute phone consultation.**

We can discuss your goals and I will answer any questions you may have about how Cascade Massage Therapy can benefit you.