

Posture Tips for Patients with Head and Jaw Pain

How does my posture contribute to my headaches and jaw pain?

Poor posture may cause muscle fatigue and abnormal stresses on your joints and muscles. This may lead to pain, including headaches and jaw pain. Proper posture may help to strengthen muscles, combat fatigue, and reduce abnormal stresses on joints and muscles. Proper posture may help prevent, reduce, and heal headaches and jaw pain. This handout provides you tips for good posture.

Posture Tips:

1. Maintain neutral head, neck, shoulder, and arm posture while standing:

- Keep your head centered over your shoulders, front to back, and side to side.
- Keep your shoulders down.
- Keep your elbows hanging comfortably at your sides. Do not prop them up on armrests.

2. While reading: Do not read in a reclined position. Try to position reading material at eye level. Prop up your book and /or place it on a pillow on your lap to raise it up. Be sure to rest arms on a support while holding a book.

3. Working while seated:

- Adjust chair height so that your arms are supported at elbow level and not propped up too high. Your feet should be flat on the floor. Use a chair or back pillow that supports your lower back.
- Adjust your work area so there is a minimal amount of twisting required to accomplish tasks that require more than 1-2 minutes.

4. Using the computer:

- Position the computer screen at a comfortable level so that normal, neutral head posture can be maintained. If you wear glasses, make

- sure they are correct for the distance to the screen. Bifocals may become problematic as they cause additional head/neck movements.
- Position the computer keyboard at lap level so that your arms are hanging comfortably at your sides. Consider using a wrist support for typing.
5. **Using the phone:** If you are required to be on the telephone for long periods of time, use a headset. Avoid shoulder/neck propping of the phone.
 6. **Take frequent breaks:** When engaged in any activity that requires stationary positioning, take a break for 1-2 minutes every 20-30 minutes. Get up and walk around. Reposition your head in a natural position, relaxing neck and shoulder muscles. This will help restore good blood flow, rest muscles, and prevent stiffness.
 7. **Maintain aerobic fitness:** Do physical activity and stretching daily. Moving your body throughout the day may help reduce stress, muscle tension, strengthen muscles, and prevent pain. In addition to moving throughout the day, do a purposeful activity that elevates your heart rate for 20-30 minutes, at least 3-4 times per week. Please talk with your doctor before beginning any new exercise program, and work with your doctor to determine target heart rate and physical activity goals that are personalized for your needs

Please contact the Orofacial Pain Clinic at (734)-936-3940 if you have any questions or concerns!

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Editor: Jillian Rigert, DMD, MD

Reviewer: Elizabeth Hatfield, DDS

Plain Language Reviewer: Ruti Volk, MSI, AHIP

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 09/16/2021