

Sitting – The Silent Enemy

A position common in everyone's day to a varying degrees, is sitting. This position places increased load on the neck and lower back regardless of whether we sit with good posture or not. This is due to the direct compressive effects of gravity on a 'flexed spine'. Forces tend to 'bow' the spine forwards, (especially when we slump!) which stresses the tendons, ligaments and discs. In addition to this pressure our muscles adapt to this sedentary position. Certain muscles shorten and others weaken.

Everyday activities (like lifting and putting on shoes) become more difficult due to these changes. The more we sit, the more these adaptations occur and the more prone to injury we are.

It normally isn't until you have experienced a sore neck or back that we realise the stress sitting creates on those areas! Because sitting is fundamental to our lives it is important we take steps to ensure it doesn't impede our every day function.

Problems

- o It is essential for us all to sit during the day
- o It is nearly impossible to sit with good posture all the time

Solutions

- o Try not to sit for periods greater than 1 hour at a time. A quick drink breaks does wonders for the muscles and mind as well!
- o A few simple exercises at the end of the day help reverse the effects of sitting. Ask today!
- o Never go straight from sitting into physical activity or heavy lifting. A gentle warm up should precede to eliminate risk of injury
- o Make sure the chairs/lounges/cars you sit in offer enough lower back (lumbar) support. If it doesn't there are some easy modifications that can be made.

