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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

iPods, Blackberries can be a Literal "Pain in the Neck"

Cell phones, Blackberries, I-Pods and handheld games have society spending a lot of time peering down at their laps. While the gadgets are a source of entertainment and help keep people connected to friends and coworkers, handheld devices are also a source of muscle pain and injury.

I have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people complaining of pain as a result of their handheld devices. Most of my patients don't realize how much looking down at a gadget can worsen neck, back and shoulder problems.

Take a minute and hold your device in your hands and then take a look in a mirror at the way you are holding your body. It is not difficult to see the cause of your pain – poor posture and overused muscles in your neck and shoulders.

To help lessen the muscle soreness caused by popular handheld devices, I suggest the following:

- Practice good posture when using any handheld device. Sit in a chair that provides solid back support and keep feet comfortably on the floor.
- Spend only 10 minutes or less with your head tilted down looking at the device, and when possible hold the gadget at eye level.
- When at home or in the office, connect the device to your keyboard or computer.
- Take frequent breaks and alternate activities that use different muscle groups.
- Watch for warning signs of overuse such as headaches, fatigue or muscle pain.

If you continue to feel soreness, pain or muscle strain after following these tips, it may be time to visit a doctor of chiropractic. They are trained to perform the proper treatment, as well as making suggestions on appropriate stretching and light exercises.

