



# HEADS UP

## When using your Smartphone



The human head weighs about twelve pounds. But as the neck bends forward and down, the weight on the cervical spine begins to increase. At a 15-degree angle, this weight is about 27 pounds, at 30 degrees it's 40 pounds, at 45 degrees it's 49 pounds, and at 60 degrees it's 60 pounds.

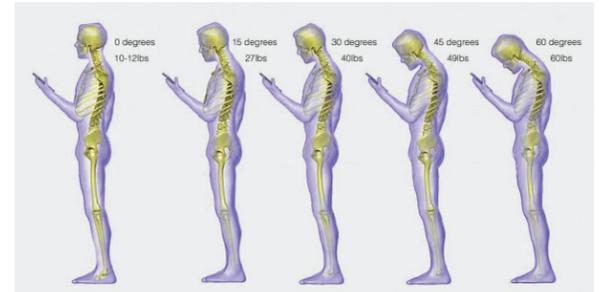
That's what staring at a smartphone does - what millions of us do for hours every day, according to research published by Kenneth Hansraj in the National Library of Medicine. The study will appear next month in Surgical Technology International. Over time, researchers say, this poor posture, sometimes called "text neck," can lead to early wear-and-tear on the spine, degeneration and even surgery."It is an epidemic or, at least, it's very common," Hansraj, chief of spine surgery at New York Spine Surgery and Rehabilitation Medicine. Just look around you, everyone has their heads down."

Can't grasp the significance of 60 pounds? Imagine carrying an 8-year-old around your neck several hours per day. Smartphone users spend an average of two to four hours per day hunched over, reading e-mails, sending texts or checking social media sites. That's 700 to 1,400 hours per year people are putting stress on their spines, according to the research. And high-schoolers might be the worst. They could conceivably spend an additional 5,000 hours in this position, Hansraj said.

"The problem is really profound in young people," he said. "With this excessive stress in the neck, we might start seeing young people needing spine care. I would really like to see parents showing more guidance. Medical experts have been warning people for years. Some say for every inch the head tilts forward, the pressure on the spine doubles.

Tom DiAngelis, president of the American Physical Therapy Association's Private Practice Section, told CNN last year the effect is similar to bending a finger all the way back and holding it there for about an hour."As you stretch the tissue for a long period of time, it gets sore, it gets inflamed," he said. It can also cause muscle strain, pinched nerves, herniated disks and, over time, it can even remove the neck's natural curve.

Poor posture can cause other problems as well. Experts say it can reduce lung capacity by as much as 30 percent. It has also been linked to headaches and neurological issues, depression and heart disease.



While it is nearly impossible to avoid the technologies that cause these issues, individuals should make an effort to look at their phones with a neutral spine and to avoid spending hours each day hunched over, according to the research.

### Smartphone tips to avoid pain:

- Look down at your device with your eyes. Don't bend you neck.
- Exercise: Move your head from left to right several times. Use your hands to provide resistance and push your head against them, first forward and then backward.
- Stand in a doorway with your arms extended and push your chest forward to strengthen the muscles of good posture.

If this trend continues Physical Therapists will be seeing more and more patients with mobile technology-induced head, neck and back pain.

Contact your physical therapist if you experience neck or back pain, they can diagnose and treat your condition.

**Don't live with a pain in the neck! Come Visit Us!**  
**Enjoy your smartphone - Just make sure your head is up.**

National Library of Medicine <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25393825>

## What Patients Are Saying

### Aubrey W.

I could not of had a better experience. My therapist really took his time with me, explaining my injury and how pain works in the body. He gave me one on one time as well as showed me exercises to do on my own. My PTA was awesome as well. He helped me with the exercises and made sure I did them correctly. Neither of them hovered of me, which would have made me uncomfortable. My pain is gone and I feel more confident about how to prevent further injury. The staff was very friendly and I looked forward to seeing them every week. I recommend this location for anyone who needs help with pain..

Thanks CACC

**FREE**  
**20 Min.**  
**Appointment**

**"The Greatest Compliment We Can Receive  
Is You Referring Your Family and Friends To Us"**



**"Care to Share" with Your  
Family & Friends**