



Physiotherapists:  
The Body Specialists

# Physio Tips

**CELL  
PHONES**

**Physiotherapy Association of BC**

## CELL PHONES

People are often surprised to learn that their shoulder and neck pain might be related to their phone use. A new syndrome, aptly named “cellular phone neck,” is now recognized as a disorder caused by cradling the telephone between your head and a hunched shoulder in order to use your hands to type, drink coffee, or turn a steering wheel. This is a proven path to shoulder pain.

Poor usage habits can lead to discomfort, but simple tips like alternating ears for each call, or storing commonly used numbers in your phone's memory can help.

The best solution is to use a hands-free headset that will free up your hands and let you keep your neck in an upright (and neutral) position. Studies show that upper back, neck and shoulder discomfort can be reduced up to 41% with the use of headsets.

## TEXT MESSAGING

Canada has seen a 300 percent increase in text messaging in the past two years, and with over one million text messages expected to be sent this year, some see a potential strain on thumb muscles and tendons.

According to HealthyComputing.com, as the popularity of text messaging continues to soar, a new form of RSI has been identified as Text Message Injury, or TMI, caused by excessive use of the thumb to type text messages into a cell phone or PDA.

This can happen when users are making hundreds of tiny repeated movements as they use the cell phone keypad.

With any type of repetitive activity like gaming or texting, the risk of injury to the tendons is increased. Physiotherapists advise be aware of your posture, limit text time to short bouts of less than 15 minutes and keep muscles long and strong. Maintaining good alignment in the head, neck, and arms while texting, along with stretching before and afterwards can go a long way to reducing the risk of injury.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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