

SMARTPHONES

Smartphones give us fantastic work flexibility; multiple strands of communication, and they are increasingly seen as a valuable link in our workflow, letting us access vital documents on the move.

But (there is a but!) their technical capability outstrips their ergonomics. While you can write long emails and documents or do spreadsheet work on them, it's unlikely you'll be comfortable doing so. Even shorter bursts of activity, if frequent enough, can cause pain and discomfort – mainly in the wrist, thumb and neck.

This short advice sheet gives you tips on how to manage the risk of strain injury from working using smartphones.

Very simply, aim to do as many of the Do's and as few of the Don'ts as you can, whatever the situation you find yourself mobile working in!

DO

Hold your phone up – aim to keep your neck as straight (neutral) as you can.

Rest your arm wherever possible to help with holding your phone up.

If you can't rest your arms, then take frequent breaks.

Hold your phone in one hand and type with the other hand.

Use a smartphone riser (not just a stand) and an external Bluetooth keyboard if your work demands significant amounts of text entry.

Use a stand/case stand – and raise the smartphone height on books, magazines (if you don't have a riser).

Use a stylus as a way of varying your wrist posture when selecting on screen.

Use a smartphone grip or a case with a grip, if your work involves walking about while using it.



DO

Try using hotkeys and shortcuts if you are using an external keyboard – to cut down on reaching to the screen.

Use dictation/voice commands if you don't have an external keyboard, and your work involves significant amounts of text entry.

Make use of the voice text facility.

Consider using a Bluetooth pen instead of typing into the smartphone screen.

Remember to take eye-rest breaks even when set up optimally – 20-20-20 – every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Rotate your screen to increase character size – e.g. view documents with the screen in landscape.

Remember to zoom in if it helps to read or view details without making the task you are doing more awkward.

Keep your screen clean and avoid working while there is glare (strong reflections) on the screen.

DO

Make sure your device's automatic brightness adjustment is not switched off.

Sit and stand – try to vary your posture and make the most of smartphones allowing you to.

Remember to BLINK! We just don't blink as much when we use devices and screens, this can be a factor leading to digital eyestrain.

DO

Check your posture regularly – try to make posture checks a habit – don't slump your shoulders, keep your neck straight.

Listen to your body – don't get worried about every little ache and pain, but try to pick up on discomfort that you can ease by adjusting to a better, more neutral, working posture.

Stop-Drop-Flop – take micro pauses e.g. at the end of an email or text, stop what you are doing, stretch and let your shoulders drop, and let your hands flop by your sides.



DON'T

Don't hold your phone down close to your body or at/ or below chest height.

Don't hold your phone in one hand and type with the thumb of the same hand.

Avoid doing sustained mobile work (15+ mins.) on a smartphone. Even set up with a keyboard etc. the screen size is not designed for reading at typical monitor or even tabletop distance.

Don't do significant amounts of text entry unless using an external keyboard, or dictation (or via a Bluetooth pen).

Don't hold your smartphone up for long periods – it will strain your wrists and shoulders (trapezius muscles) and you may still develop neck pain.

Don't support your smartphone using your pinky curled under the bottom edge.

MORE INFORMATION?

If you, or people working for you, use mobile devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones etc) to do significant amounts of work on, our website provides more guidance and tells you about our Mobile Working Risk Management System.©

Follow our social media pages for tips, product ideas and the latest mobile working news.



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