

TABLETS

It's no wonder tablets are so popular; lighter and more portable than laptops, with bigger screens and greater work flexibility than smartphones. No surprise that they are increasingly used for work across many industries and business sectors.

Tablets are great news for business, but we can find ourselves working in poor postures when we use them, over the long-term causing loss of posture, pain and discomfort.

The body area at most risk from tablet use is our neck. Most tablets aren't light enough yet to hold up like a book or magazine for long periods, so we tend to hold them lower, which results in poor neck posture. When they are on a table or desk we forget to prop our tablets up; we use them flat or at a shallow angle which can also lead to poor neck posture.

This short advice sheet gives you tips on how to manage the risk of strain injury from working using tablets. Because of the range of uses for tablets and the wide range of mobile working situations, prescriptive advice can be long-winded so our tips are basically two lists – Do's and Don'ts.

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

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

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

Use a stylus to improve wrist posture when selecting on screen, especially if you have put your tablet on a riser or stand.

DO

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

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.

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

DO

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.

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

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

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.

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

DON'T

Don't work for more than 15 or 20 minutes at a time (without a break) unless you have set up optimally (i.e. with a keyboard, input device, **tablet stand**).

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

If seated upright, don't rest your tablet on your lap while you use it – your neck posture will be poor.

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

Don't support your tablet using your pinky at the base.

DO

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 micropauses 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.

Sit and stand – tablets can give you the option to do either, which can be a great advantage.

Avoid working in 'informal' postures (e.g. tablet positioned off to one side, or lying on your front).

If you are seated reclined, if possible raise your tablet by propping it up on your knees (if there is no suitable surface to sit it on, or if you are interacting heavily with it as opposed to watching a film etc.)

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.©

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