

Media Release

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Time to put your back into your healthcare!

When it comes to reasons for visiting the doctor, only the number one cause – the common cold – beats back pain.

It's estimated that four out of every five adults (a whopping 80%) will experience back pain at some point in their lives. It's a problem that is affecting industry, with studies suggesting absenteeism through back pain is costing UK companies £673 per employee per year.

So what are the causes and what can we do about it? Some of the reasons are quite obvious: bad posture, lengthy use of computers or tablets, and carrying heavy loads. Other contributory factors are less obvious, such as not drinking enough water and not eating the right foods.

The good news is that there are some simple things we can all do to help ourselves. The United Chiropractic Association (UCA) is using **Back Care Awareness Week on 7-11 October** to issue some top tips to correct spinal problems.

- If you work at a computer, take regular stretch breaks; ensure you sit correctly and that your workstation is ergonomically right for you.
- Take care when lifting – whether you're at work, doing DIY, gardening or lifting a young child or baby.
- Gardeners and physical workers - always use the right tools, take frequent breaks and do regular stretches.
- Children – carry your schoolbags over both shoulders to prevent uneven weight distribution and take to school only what you need for that day.
- And ladies, it's time you looked at the contents of your handbag – do you really need all those things you're lugging around with you all day?
- Finally, get walking! Walking strengthens the body and helps position the spine in the natural shape it was designed for. It also helps to build up core strength, which is important in maintaining good posture.



There are other things we can all do to help our backs too, according to Estelle Zauner-Maughan of the UCA: “Most people are chronically dehydrated and the first sign is aches and pains and fatigue. People need to be drinking much more water; staying hydrated cuts out some of those aches and pains.

“Watch what you’re eating, too. Non-processed food is best. Processed foods and those that are high in sugar cause inflammation in the body so go for things from nature; things from the tree or beastie are best.”

When it comes to exercise, Estelle, who is a chiropractor at Naturally Chiropractic in Tynemouth, says squat jumps are perfect – especially for people who work in offices: “Sitting is a huge issue. In October, we’re trying to get everyone moving. In the practice we’re asking people to do three or four squat jumps every hour. You have to use every single muscle and it fires up your nervous system. It’s great for the spine.”

Estelle has noticed a difference in the type of conditions she is dealing with: “It changes with trends and at the moment we are getting a lot of issues with neck, shoulder, upper back and wrists because people are using tablets instead of computers or laptops. They’re using it in funny positions and the tablets are heavy to use.

“Handbags is another issue; we need to learn how to carry them on both arms because if you’re carrying your handbag on the same shoulder all the time, it’s bad.

“So yes, there are some issues because of the way we live, but it’s important for people to know there are some things they can do to reduce the health risks.”

The UCA has around 500 members nationally. Further advice and tips on posture, exercise and diet can be found on the UCA’s LiveWell website or ask your local chiropractor.

www.live-well.uk.com

www.unitedchiropractic.org