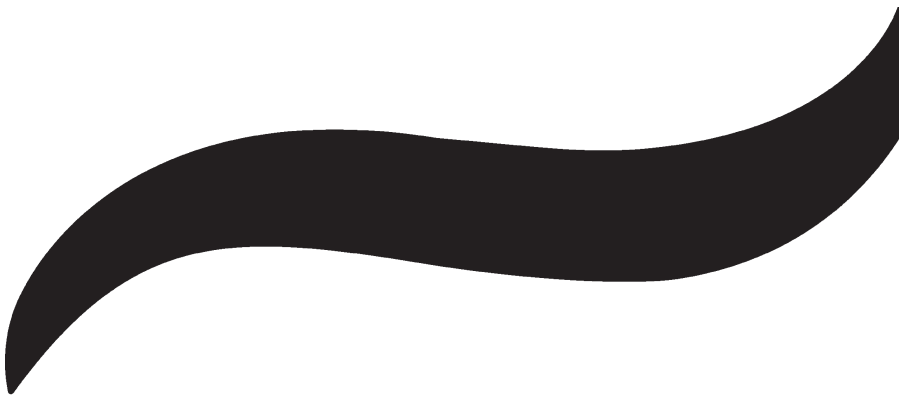




Normal Breathing in the Workplace

Information for patients
Physiotherapy



NORMAL BREATHING IN THE WORKPLACE

Many of us take breathing for granted; however, as many as 10% of the population have breathing patterns which may cause headaches, shoulder, arm or back pain and may even affect your digestion and sleep pattern.

People are using computers and talking on the phone more than ever and this can lead to inactivity which can affect your posture and breathing health.

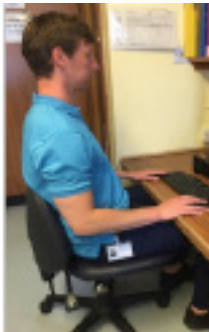
Here are a few hints and tips you can use to maintain healthy breathing in the workplace.

WORKPLACE STRESS IS A RECOGNISED CONDITION OF 21ST CENTURY LIFE

Many of us spend hours of our working day sitting in front of a computer screen or participating in meetings. This can lead us to have poor posture and increased activity in our shoulder and chest muscles, which can result in upper chest breathing and an altered rhythm of breathing.

This altered breathing uses 30% more energy than if we have a relaxed breathing pattern.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

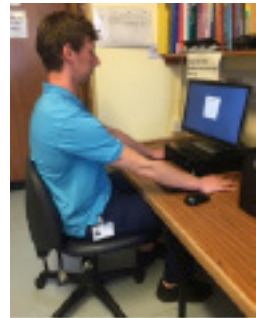


Look after your posture

Ensure you are sitting in an appropriate chair. This should allow you to sit with your bottom at the back of the chair, your feet flat on the floor and the angle of your hips to the ground should be just over 90 degrees. Before placing your hands on the key board, reach past the key board and then place your hands on the keys.

Practice nose tummy breathing

Once you have corrected your posture, let your shoulders drop and “let go” of your upper chest muscles and any activity around your upper shoulders and neck. Breathe out. This sequence of events can be thought of as “Stop, Drop, and Flop”. Once you have “Let go” initiate your next breath in using your tummy.



Try breathing in and out through your nose. When you breathe in your tummy should gently rise and when you breathe out your tummy should fall. This is due to your diaphragm gently moving up and down. Breathing in and out through your nose is normal.

This type of breathing may feel strange at first, however, this is what your body wants to do....you just have to allow it to happen.



If you find nose tummy breathing whilst sitting is too difficult, you can practice “normal” breathing at home. Lie on your back, if you find this uncomfortable lie with your knees bent up, a pillow underneath your knees may help.

“Let go” of your shoulders, chest and arms and breathe through your nose. You should notice your tummy rising as you breathe in and falling as you breathe out. Do this exercise daily for 20 mins. Once you can achieve this try again in a sitting position.

Change your position regularly

It’s very easy to be caught up in work and sit in a static position for many hours. It is important that you change your position regularly.

Think about standing up and moving around frequently.

When you can, stand up, move around and “re-set” your posture. Improving your breathing pattern at work can improve your concentration and productivity and reduce your fatigue. Give it a go!

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