



The majority of the population in the UK in work have an office-based job. The stress, long hours, commute and sedentary lifestyle can cause a considerable impact on the health and overall well-being of workers. As a physiotherapist, I see many office workers who are struggling with aches, pains and overall discomfort caused by their lifestyle. Here I have provided an overview of the things that can be causing your body harm, and what you can do to alleviate the problems.

Sitting at your desk all day

Research shows that sitting at your desk for long periods of time increases your risk of muscular skeletal disorders. It is proven that being sedentary daily causes your metabolism to slow, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat – this causes a huge amount of stress on the body and can make you feel lethargic.

I advise patients who have a desk-based job to break up long periods of sitting with shorter bouts of activity for a few

minutes. This could be walking to get a glass of water, going to speak to a colleague or even making a cup of tea.

Stress and lack of sleep

Contrary to common belief, it isn't your posture at your desk that is causing your back pain or your muscles to ache, it is more likely to be the stress of the job and sleep deprivation. Stress and sleep deprivation have an inflammatory role that can cause muscles to become extremely tight even to the point of pain. High stress and anxiety can cause

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If you work in a stressful environment, you need to ensure you are doing regular light to moderate exercise to help loosen tight muscles and stretch, and take regular breaks from sitting at your desk.

If you already suffer from a sore back, speak to your HR team and ask for an ergonomic assessment to help you feel more comfortable.

Typing too much or straining to use a desk mouse

Frantic typing for long periods of time and keeping your mouse in a locked position could be causing conditions such as repetitive strain injury or carpal tunnel syndrome. Repetitive strain injury is caused when tendons are straining more than they should for long periods of time either due to movement repetition, a sustained awkward position or prolonged pressing against hard surfaces. This commonly occurs in the wrists due to overuse of a desk mouse. Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused when there is excessive pressure on the

median nerve, which allows feeling and movement in parts of the hand. It is common for people to get this if they regularly type on a keyboard for long periods of time. Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome include pain, numbness, tingling or weakness.

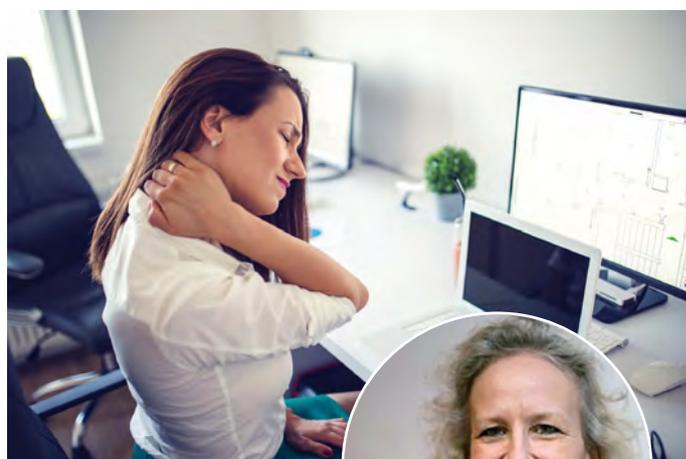
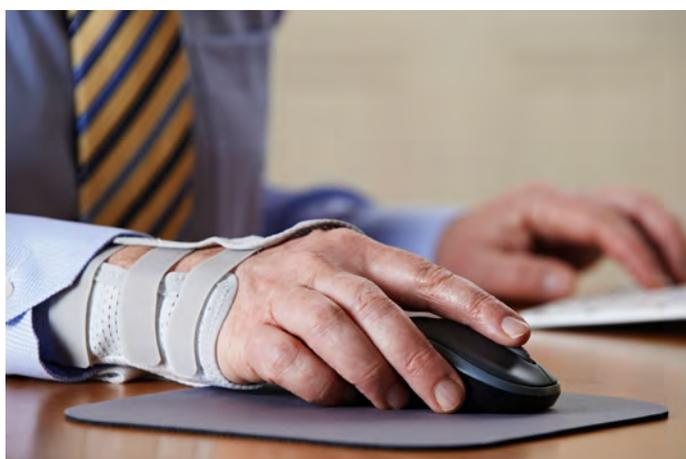
Tips to help protect you against these conditions include:

1. Keeping your wrists straight
2. Letting your hands float above the keyboard
3. Not straining your fingers when typing

Carrying heavy bags

Carrying heavy bags on one shoulder on your commute can cause and reinforce muscle imbalances in the shoulders and spine. This causes neck and back pain, shoulder strain and fatigue because you are over compensating for the heavy weight. Imbalances can also affect the gait and the way your body moves. Some of my patients who regularly carry heavy bags on one shoulder also have an increased forward head posture and rounded shoulders.

If you have lots of heavy items to carry to and from work I recommend using backpacks which evenly distribute the weight on each side.



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