

# Safety FOCUSED

MAY 2017

## Prevent Text Neck

Text neck—upper back and neck pain associated with prolonged mobile device usage—is causing concern in the medical community. Learn how to recognize and prevent text neck with these tips.

## Protect Your Eyes From the Summer Sun

Outdoor workers need protective eyewear not just for work hazards, but also for the sun and its UV rays. Protect your eyes by taking these recommended precautions.

**Young patients who shouldn't yet have back and neck issues are reporting disk hernias and alignment problems related to prolonged smartphone use.**

A monthly safety newsletter from



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## Prevent Text Neck

According to a recent report from The Spine Journal, surgeons are noticing an increase in patients with text neck—upper back and neck pain related to poor posture when using mobile devices. In fact, young patients who shouldn't yet have back and neck issues are reporting disk hernias and alignment problems. As mobile device usage is relatively recent, such injuries are unprecedented, and doctors are worried about the effects of prolonged usage on people's posture as they age.

In order to prevent text neck, recommends the following tips when using a smartphone or mobile device:

- Hold your mobile device at eye level to prevent stress on the neck and spine.
- Take frequent breaks to lessen the strain on the neck.
- Use a desktop monitor at eye level when working on a laptop for extended periods of time.
- Perform stretches throughout the day to improve blood circulation and relieve tension caused by poor posture. Some examples include rolling the shoulders or tilting the head to the left and right.
- Use web versions of instant messaging services instead of the mobile version. In doing so, you can avoid looking down at your mobile device and maintain better posture.

## Protect Your Eyes From the Summer Sun

While most people are aware of the cause-and-effect relationship between the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays and skin cancer, less people are aware of the damage that the sun and UV radiation can cause to the eyes. Of those who do protect their eyes with sunglasses, 47 percent don't check the UV protection level of their sunglasses before purchasing them.

According to the American Optometric Association, both short- and long-term exposure to sunlight can cause damage to the eyes. Short-term exposure can lead to any of the following conditions:

- Photokeratitis (sunburn to the cornea)
- Pterygium (tissue growth on the whites of the eyes that can block vision)
- Skin cancer on the eyelids

Long-term overexposure to sunlight and UV radiation over the course of a lifetime can also result in cataracts, age-related macular degeneration and cancer that affects the

skin around the eye or even the eye itself.

Outdoor workers need eyewear that protects them not only from job hazards, but also from the sun. In order to reduce sun exposure to the eyes, consider the following tips when working outdoors:

- Wear sunglasses with UV protection of more than 95 percent, even in cloudy weather.
- Wear sunglasses with a lens tint that blocks at least 80 percent, but no more than 90 percent, of transmissible light. Some recommended tints to choose from are amber, neutral gray, brown and green.
- Protect your eyes from all angles by wearing sunglasses that wrap all the way around the temples, or wear a hat with a 3-inch brim to block overhead sunlight.

## UV RADIATION CHECKLIST

If you can answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions, you may be exposed to an increased risk of eye damage from UV radiation.

- Do you work or spend a great deal of time outdoors?
- Are you a welder or medical technologist?
- Do you work in the graphic arts or in the manufacture of electronic circuit boards?
- Do you take medication that could increase your sensitivity to UV radiation?
- Have you had cataract surgery in one or both eyes?

