

Making friends with a laptop

MESSAGE OIL

Low back pain is a very common phenomenon in laptop users. More than 80% people using computers for more than 4 h complain of back pain, with about 90% of people suffering from it at some point in their lives. In many countries, chronic low back pain is the most common cause of long-term disability in middle age.

Low back pain is a major health problem, not only because of the high prevalence and incidence of low back problems but also because of the important consequences which are disability, the use of health services, sickness absence, and early retirement. Back pain also accounts for many lost working days.

Computer work has generated a new genre of occupational health problems, i.e., of computer-related problems. Postural back pain is a major public and occupational health problem, especially in the information technology (IT) sector. This problem, if ignored, can prove debilitating and cause crippling injuries, forcing one to change their profession.

The COVID – 19 pandemic has forced companies and people buy new laptops and start working remotely from home. To prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), desk workers in Japan have been encouraged to work from home. Due to rapidly increased working from home, working in environments that are not properly designed and working with poor posture can affect low back pain. The high incidence of low back pain among desk workers is caused by prolonged sitting times and poor body posture, as well as other environmental factors. Most people do not have properly equipped for work at home, so they sit on kitchen chairs, sit on a couch with a laptop on their knees. People could not follow a normal exercise routine, whether it was a gym or a yoga class. Also, during the pandemic, people became interested in how they could help themselves in this matter, the purchase of various sports mats, exercise machines, massagers became popular, as well as the purchase of massage equipment, such as massage oil, “bodyfeel”. But lets start everything from the beginning.

Many people use their laptop as their primary computer, so it is important to have it setup correctly in order to avoid back pain, neck pain, and other musculoskeletal injuries or strains. The problem is that laptop computers are designed with portability in mind rather than sound ergonomic principles. Basically, if the screen is at the right height then the keyboard is too high, and if the keyboard is in the right position, then the screen is too close and too low. And, laptop touchpads and trackballs are never very user friendly.

Given these challenges, here are 10 simple tips for the best laptop setups:

- Use a large screen. Get a laptop with the largest screen possible for your needs to avoid the stressful posture that results from straining to see the text on a small screen. Many laptops offer large screens (15" plus), but these can be difficult to use while on the go.
- Place the screen at eye level. Ideally, set your laptop height and screen angle so you can easily view the screen without bending or rotating your neck, and put it about an arm's length in front of you. To do this, you will usually need to elevate the laptop a few inches above your desk, which you can do by placing it on a stable support surface such as a laptop stand or on a thick book.
- Do not slouch. Despite the name "laptop", you want to avoid propping your laptop on top of your lap as this requires you to slouch down to see the screen. If you have to work on your lap, such as while you're on the train, at least put the laptop on top of your computer bag or briefcase so you can raise it up slightly.
- Use a separate keyboard. When using the laptop for extended periods, use an external, full-sized keyboard with your laptop and position it at a height that allows your shoulders and arms to be in a relaxed position, with your elbows at a 90° angle when typing. Ideally, place the separate keyboard on a keyboard tray beneath your desk surface to help ensure that your wrists stay in a neutral (flat) position.
- Use a separate mouse. Be kind to your wrists by using an independent mouse rather than the mouse that is incorporated into your laptop keyboard. Ideally, place the mouse on an adjustable-position mouse platform so you can keep it near your body and keep your wrist flat while using it.
- Recline slightly. If you can't use a separate keyboard and mouse, an alternative is to find a chair that allows you to recline slightly. This will allow you to position the laptop keyboard and mouse with the least strain on your neck. Angle the screen slightly upward so that you can view the screen without having to bend your neck too far down.
- Prop up your feet. If you have to raise your chair so that your arms and wrists are positioned comfortably, check to see how your legs are angled. Your knees should be at about the level of your hips. If your hips are too high, you need to put a footrest or small box under your feet to prop them up and keep excess strain off your lower back.
- Make your chair work for you. The type of office chair you use is critical. Basically, any office chair that is fully adjustable and has lumbar support will work, but you need to be sure to set it up correctly.
- Take a break. Take brief breaks every half hour, at the very least taking your eyes off the screen and letting them rest on something in the distance, and doing some simple stretches

while at your desk, such as stretching your neck, shoulders, arms and legs. Every one or two hours, leave your desk to walk around to get your blood flowing and move your muscles.

- Travel light. Be careful when carrying your laptop around. The power supply cord, spare battery and other accessories in your laptop bag may add a lot of weight. If you carry your laptop to work and home again, get duplicate power cords and other peripheral components to leave in each place so that you don't have to carry everything back and forth. Carry your bag across your lower back in a messenger bag style, or use a backpack with dual padded shoulder straps (and avoid draping the bag over just one shoulder).

However, despite all the tips above, if you have a back pain and want to avoid medication, then try the massage therapy. Most healthcare providers are recognizing massage therapy as a legitimate aid for lower back pain and an effective adjunct to lower back treatments.

A study on massage and back pain conducted at the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami in 2001 found that: "Massage lessened lower back pain, depression and anxiety, and improved sleep. The massage therapy group also showed improved range of motion and their serotonin and dopamine levels were higher." According to the American Massage Therapy Association, research shows that massage therapy provides several important health benefits, including: Massage improves blood circulation, which aids in recovery of muscle soreness from physical activity. Massage relaxes muscles for an improved range of motion. The muscle relaxation also helps with insomnia. Massage leads to increased endorphin levels. The increase of endorphin levels is actually one of the greatest benefits of massage therapy. Endorphins are the chemicals the body produces that make you feel good, which is very effective in managing chronic pain.

Try at-home massage for back pain with your partner. For this, we recommend using body oil "body feel", which gives skin moisture and nourishes it. If you still want a professional massage, then you should consult a specialist.

Finding the right massage therapy for you presents some challenges. One is that practitioners vary considerably in their level of training and experience. There's also great variation in the kinds of massage available. Swedish massage is the most common type of massage offered. Swedish massage involves long, gliding strokes and kneading of the major muscle groups, as well as friction, gentle rhythmic slapping, and vibration. Among the many other techniques in the marketplace are deep-tissue, pressure-point, Thai, and neuromuscular massage. There are other styles of massage, like Reflexology and Sports Massage, but the ones listed are some of the more common. For people who experience back pain, massage therapy can bring much-needed relief. There is no set amount of sessions recommended because each situation is different.

There is a general agreement that spine massage therapy can relieve muscle tension and help restore balance in the working of the muscles in the lower back. Spine massage therapy is normally used in combination with other treatments that include over-the-counter medications, exercise, posture improvement (especially when sitting), and physical therapy. It is important to talk to your doctor about your low back pain and develop a plan of action for living a pain-free life.

So all in all, how do you find a massage specialist? You can get a recommendation from a doctor,

friend or online review. You can also book several massages with different masseurs to see which one you prefer. You should feel comfortable with him so that you can relax completely. Make sure your masseur is properly trained, licensed and certified. You can also talk to your masseur briefly before you start the session so you can express your expectations and ask any important questions.

Kinesiotherapy or Kinesitherapy meaning “movement therapy”, is the therapeutic treatment of disorders or diseases by active and passive muscular movements and several exercises which we can implement in our daily life or with the assistance of a physiotherapist. It is the core element of physiotherapy or physical therapy to relief the body from physical pain.

Almost every individual who has suffered from low back pain should stretch their hamstring muscles once or twice daily. Simple hamstring stretching does not take much time, although it can be difficult to remember, especially if there is little or no pain. Therefore, hamstring stretching exercises are best done at the same time every day so it becomes part of a person's daily routine. There are many more stretches that can be done to alleviate lower back pain.

To strengthen the back muscles, 15 to 20 minutes of dynamic lumbar stabilization or other prescribed exercises should be done every other day. Core muscle strengthening is also important in lower back pain treatment. It is important to perform the exercises correctly in order to see benefits, so they are best learned with the help of a physical therapist or other qualified health professional.

Low impact aerobics are important for long term pain reduction. There are many options available, such as walking, bicycling swimming or water therapy. Aerobic exercise is often best done for 30 to 40 minutes three times weekly, on alternate days from the strengthening exercises.

Even patients with a very busy schedule should be able to maintain a moderate back pain exercise regimen that encompasses stretching, strengthening, and aerobic conditioning. These exercises suffice as physical therapy for back pain relief.

To sum up, no matter how you are working, keep one thing in mind: pain is a signal that something is wrong. Comfort is a key to productivity—as well as avoiding serious musculoskeletal issues, so take some time to arrange a work environment that is good for your body —and maybe even your bottom line. Use prevention with physical therapy and take care of yourself before the pain becomes a disturber.

#laptop, #massage, #back pain

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