



MEDIA RELEASE: Wednesday 28th May 2025

Women Hit Hardest by Tech Neck Reveals New Data: Teens & Kids Also at Risk

“Get the heads up on tech neck!” – National Spinal Health Week is 26 May to 1 June 2025

According to the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA), **Tension Neck Syndrome**, a debilitating condition commonly known as **‘tech neck’** or **‘text neck’** that develops from overuse or misuse of technology, is having an increased impact on the spinal health of Australian women, teens and children.

The independent national survey, **‘The impact of tech neck and neck pain in Australia’** conducted by award winning global research company *Pureprofile* revealed that while men are affected, women are the primary sufferers of neck pain in every age bracket, except 51-60, with women aged 31-40 (73%) are most impacted, reflecting a life-long, daily exposure to tech,” said Dr Ali Young, Chair of the ACA Women in Chiropractic committee and mother of two.

“According to the survey 68% of women reported device-related neck pain across all types of devices including smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers and game consoles, and are experiencing a higher prevalence of neck pain than men for each length of timeframe devices are used,” she said.

“Women consistently reported higher neck pain rates across all devices and settings (home and workplace), and were significantly more affected by chronic pain, mental health impacts, and productivity loss,” she said.

The survey found that women using laptops were 23% more likely than men to sit at non-ergonomic desks at work which was associated with a 16% higher incidence of neck pain than in women who used an ergonomic workspace. Additionally, women were 31% more likely to slouch while using laptops than men, with 86% of female *‘slouchers’* experiencing neck pain compared 75% of slouching men.

Women were also 30% more likely than men to experience neck pain when using a tablet at work while seated at a desk without ergonomics; and at home, female tablet users seated on the floor reported a 79% higher prevalence of neck pain than men.

“What the data tells us is that neck pain is a widespread, increasingly gendered issue in Australia, with 68% of women compared to 60% of men reporting symptoms, most linked to poor posture, extended screen time, and non-ergonomic device use,” she said.

“Maintaining correct posture, correct ergonomics and taking regular movement breaks, significantly reduced neck pain prevalence. Smartphone users who took regular breaks reported 33% less neck pain, while 85% of women device users who never took breaks experienced neck pain - compared to 61% of women who did.

In a separate survey of ACA Chiropractors, a worrying trend observed since COVID-19 is that the cases of children and teens experiencing neck pain has surged making them vulnerable to spinal health issues and additional health implications now and in the future.

“ACA Chiropractors reported a sharp rise in tech neck among young people with 34% reporting a *‘significant increase (+25%)’* and 27% a *‘moderate increase (11-24%)’* in teens. 29% reported a *‘significant increase,’* and 25% found a *‘moderate increase’* in children experiencing tech neck so it’s vital we educate kids early on healthy device habits to help prevent long-term neck-related health issues,” said Dr Young.

A range of studies have shown smartphone and computer use can have a significant impact on pain severity among tech neck sufferers with the most prevalent symptoms of neck and back pain linked to the length of time spent using a device and the degree of discomfort experienced.

A recent study *‘The Association Between Mobile Phone Usage Duration, Neck Muscle Endurance, and Neck Pain Among University Students’* published in *Nature* (29.8.2024), examined the correlation between phone use, duration, addiction, neck muscle endurance, and neck pain in university students.

“Although the study focused on mobile phone use by university students, with almost 87% of Australians now regular smartphone users, it’s fair to consider the findings may be broadly applied to the population generally, particularly young people who’ve grown up using smartphones and tablets,” said Dr Young.

Overall, the national consumer survey conducted by Pureprofile showed that 64% of Australians reported experiencing neck pain (68% of women versus 60% of men) – much higher than the official statistic of 1-in-5 people with 70% of neck pain sufferers reporting neck pain impeded their movement or day-to-day activities.

“With technology an essential part of our everyday lives, not only must we monitor the length of time we use our devices, but we must be cognisant that overuse and the way we use them can negatively impact our spinal health as well as our mental health.

“With only 36% of neck pain sufferers being aware that their neck pain was linked to device use, to help prevent users developing tech neck it’s imperative we adjust our thinking on how we use technology, how often we use it and the way we use it,” said Dr Young.

“Of concern, 38% of neck pain sufferers did not consult a healthcare practitioner, and only 29% sought a formal diagnosis. Instead, 78% of neck pain sufferers used over-the-counter pain relief and 47% relied on prescription medication. While more men preferred taking tablets, women used them more frequently with men 26% more likely to use prescription medication for their neck pain,” Dr Young said.

While medications may offer temporary relief from neck pain, academic studies, including research from the University of Sydney, show opioids do not benefit people with acute neck or back pain (lasting up to 12 weeks) and have no positive role in treatment; comparatively, studies have shown that commencing treatment for tech neck promptly is crucial in preventing further functional decline and progression to a chronic condition.

Tech neck isn’t only affecting Australians’ physical health, sufferers are reporting that their mental health and productivity is impacted with 24% experiencing higher irritability, 20% noticing poorer concentration and 23% had sleep disruption; with women 43% more effected by productivity loss than men.

“With over 80% of ACA Chiropractors surveyed reporting 50% or more neck pain patients said their mental health had suffered; 87% reported higher irritability, stress and poorer concentration; and an alarming 47% reported experiencing depression or anxiety because of neck pain, preventing tech neck is best,” she said.

“The ACA recommends limiting recreational screentime to two hours per day, holding devices at eye level to prevent bending the neck forward, changing posture and taking regular breaks every ten minutes to look away from the device and move the neck from side-to-side,” Dr Young said.

Incorrect and non-ergonomic use of computers is also a primary cause of tech neck. Although most common among office workers, with 75.5% of Australians aged 16 to 64 using computers daily, incorrect use and non-ergonomic workspaces can lead to a range of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

“With MSDs, including tech neck, costing the Australian economy over \$55 billion annually through direct health costs, lost productivity and reduced quality of life, the burden on Australians and our economy is significant.

“Whether using a laptop or a desktop at home, for study or work; it’s essential to take regular postural breaks every 30 minutes for movement and stretching and ensure workstations are set up ergonomically correct to help prevent tech neck, increase productivity and maintain overall spinal health and wellbeing,” she said.

With millions of Australian women suffering from neck pain, and data revealing that our children and young people are at risk of tech neck, national *Spinal Health Week* is dedicated to promoting spinal health and preventing the incidences of tech neck and related health issues in Australians of all ages.

Get the heads up on tech neck and download ACA’s FREE *Avoiding Tech Neck Factsheets* and *Electronic Device Checklists for Adults, Parents and Students*, the *Ergonomic Checklist*, and the *Stand Corrected Stretching Poster* available to download from www.spinalhealthweek.org.au.

- ENDS -

#HeadsUponTechNeck #SpinalHealthWeek #ConsultAChiro #AdjustYourThinking #TechNeck #NeckPain

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

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For information about national **Spinal Health Week 2025**, contact ACA **02 8844 0400** or visit spinalhealthweek.org.au.

MEDIA CENTRE - SPINAL HEALTH WEEK 2025: <https://bit.ly/SHW25-Media>
SURVEY REPORT <https://bit.ly/SHW25-Impact-of-Neck-Pain>

THE IMPACT OF TECH NECK & NECK PAIN IN AUSTRALIA – AN OVERVIEW

An Independent National Consumer Survey Conducted By Pureprofile

1019 Respondents | 522 Female | 497 Male

651 Reported Neck Pain (64%) | 353 Female (68%) | 298 Male (60%)

Neck Pain is Common & Gendered

- ⦿ **64%** of Australians reported experiencing neck pain: 68% of women and 60% of men.
- ⦿ **70% of neck pain sufferers reported neck pain impeded their movement or daily activities.**
- ⦿ **Women in every age group (except 51–60)** reported higher neck pain rates than men.
- ⦿ **Women were 18% more likely to experience neck pain than men.**
- ⦿ The most affected group: **Women aged 31–40 (73%).**
- ⦿ Correct posture, regular breaks and ergonomics while using devices had a significant impact on **reducing the prevalence of neck pain for all devices.**

Ergonomics & Gender Disparities

- ⦿ **Women were 23% more likely to sit at non-ergonomic desks at work** - associated with a 16% higher neck pain prevalence (75% vs 64%) when compared to women using an ergonomic workspace.
- ⦿ **Women are 30% more likely than men to experience neck pain seated at a desk without ergonomics** while using their tablet at work – 73% of women compared to 56% of men.
- ⦿ **Women were 31% more likely to slouch using laptops than men**, with 86% of female slouchers experiencing neck pain compared to 75% of men.
- ⦿ **Female tablet users seated on the floor reported 79% higher neck pain prevalence than men.**
- ⦿ **Men were 44% more likely to use tablets at ergonomic desks, experiencing 20.4% less neck pain than women in the same setup.**

Posture & Device Use Patterns

- ⦿ **Holding a smartphone at eye level, the recommended position, was associated with the lowest neck pain prevalence (64%) but was only used by only 37.5% of smartphone users.**
- ⦿ The most common posture (56%) was bending the neck to look down, with 72% reporting neck pain.
- ⦿ 20% of respondents walked while looking down at their phones; 74% reporting neck pain.
- ⦿ Women were significantly more likely to: Slouch or lean back while using devices at work (+41% with phones); use devices on the floor, with higher pain rates and use non-ergonomic setups at home and work.
- ⦿ 20% of respondents check their smartphone every 30-60mins, 13.5% every 10-30mins, 6% every 5-10mins.

Perception: Neck Pain & Device Use

- ⦿ **DEVICE USE LINKED TO NECK PAIN:**
 - 45% of respondents said neck pain could be linked to device use. 35% said it “maybe linked”.
 - Only 36% of neck pain sufferers thought their neck pain was linked to device use.
- ⦿ **NECK PAIN AFTER 15 MINS OF PHONE USE:** 45% of respondents indicated neck pain was a problem when using a device for 15+ minutes.
- ⦿ **CONCERN FOR LENGTH OF TIME ON SMARTPHONE:**
 - 61% of women are concerned to some degree compared to 51% of men.
 - 53% of respondents have some level of concern for the length of time spent on their smartphone with women 20% more concerned about the implications than men.

Neck Pain: Causes

- ⦿ **Medical Diagnosis:** Only 33% of sufferers sought a medical diagnosis - 67% of neck pain sufferers have not.
- ⦿ Only 29% had the cause of pain identified. The top two causes were degenerative (10%) and tech neck (6%).
- ⦿ **Top 6 Self-Reported Causes:** Poor sleep (37%), Smartphone Use (28%), Aging (27%), Home Computer Use (24%), Work Computer Use (22%) and Stress (19%).

Device Duration & Pain

Neck pain increases with screen time:

- ⦿ **42% of smartphone users spend between 2-6 hours daily;** 47% of tablet users spend under 60mins daily.
- ⦿ Across all devices, women reported **8–26% higher prevalence** of neck pain than men for each timeframe.
- ⦿ Women using smartphones **4–6 hours/day** were **43% more likely** to report pain than men (81% vs 56%).
- ⦿ At 6–8 hours/day, women were **60% more likely** to experience neck pain (70% vs 43%).

Impact on Daily Life

- ⦿ **70% reported neck pain impeded their movement or daily activities.** With exercise ceased or reduced by 24% of sufferers.
- ⦿ **65% reported adverse effects from neck pain** with women reporting 17% more adverse effects than men.
- ⦿ **Top effects:** irritability (24%), sleep interference (23%), concentration difficulty (20%) sleep deprivation (16%).
- ⦿ **Women were:**
 - 75% more likely to develop chronic neck pain
 - 43% more affected by productivity loss
 - 41% more likely to report mental health/wellbeing impacts
 - 33% more likely to experience depression/anxiety due to neck pain
 - 22% more affected by significant pain than men

Pain Management & Prevention

- ⦿ **Medication:**
 - **78% took over-the-counter pain relief;** the most common treatment method.
 - **47% took prescription medication:** 53% of men and 42% women.
- ⦿ **Chronic Pain:** 26% of sufferers developed chronic neck pain (persisting for 3+ months or constantly recurring).
- ⦿ 15% of neck pain sufferers required workers compensation.
- ⦿ **Medical/Healthcare Practitioner:** 38% of neck pain sufferers did not consult a practitioner.
- ⦿ **Chiropractic:** 73% of chiropractic users reported improvement in neck pain.
- ⦿ **Lifestyle Changes:**
 - 19% have changed how they physically use devices.
 - **66% of sufferers were willing to improve posture,** and 63% to exercise/stretch more.
 - Women were 28% more likely to reduce screen time and 8% more likely to exercise.
 - Men were 11% more likely to improve ergonomics - the only change they outpaced women on.
 - Only 35% of neck pain sufferers would improve ergonomics.

Health Impact

- ⦿ **65%** reported that neck pain affected their daily life.
- ⦿ **73% reported neck pain has not completely resolved; causing ongoing issues or is prone to reinjury.**
- ⦿ Top adverse effects: Irritability (24%), Sleep interference (23%), Difficulty concentrating (20%), Sleep deprivation (16%).
- ⦿ **Women were:**
 - **Twice as likely to experience severe, debilitating neck pain** than men with the majority experiencing mild neck pain.
 - **75% more likely** to develop chronic neck pain.
 - **43% more impacted** by productivity loss.
 - **41% more likely** to report mental health impacts.

Pain Management & Behaviour Change

- ⊙ **Top Management Actions:** Over-the-counter medication (24%), Visiting a GP (23%), Reducing device use or changing device habits.
- ⊙ **Lifestyle Changes:** Neck pain sufferers would consider improving posture (**66%**); exercising/stretching more (**63%**) and taking regular breaks from devices (**50%**).

Tech Use & Posture Insights

- ⊙ Women are more affected by device-related neck pain across all devices than men: **Smartphones:** +13% (68% vs 60%), **Tablets:** +14% (71% vs 62%), **Laptops:** +14% (68% vs 59%) and **Gaming consoles:** +26% (83% vs 65%).
- ⊙ Users who bent their neck to look down were **24% more likely** to experience neck pain than those who held their device at eye level.
- ⊙ **Only 37.5%** of users held their phone at eye level, though this had the lowest pain prevalence (64%).
- ⊙ **USER BREAKS & STRETCHING:**
 - **Smartphones:** 80% of device users who rarely take breaks whilst using their device suffer neck pain compared to 60% of users who took regular breaks.
 - **For women,** 85% who never take breaks suffer neck pain compared to 61% of women who do take breaks.
 - **Gamers:** Male gamers who had regular breaks reported 33% less neck pain than those who didn't.

Workplace & Lifestyle Trends

- ⊙ **Sedentary female workers experienced the highest rate of neck pain and were 22% more likely to experience neck pain than men** (71.7% v 59%).
- ⊙ Workers involved in repetitive movements or pulling/pushing tasks reported the highest incidence of neck pain, with 71% affected in both categories.
- ⊙ Active workers reported the lowest prevalence of neck pain (61%).
- ⊙ Female workers were more likely to use non-ergonomic setups and reported more neck pain.
- ⊙ 71% of full-time students reported neck pain with female students 63% more likely to experience neck pain than male students (81.8% v 50%).
- ⊙ Shift workers (71%) reported higher neck pain prevalence than day workers.
- ⊙ **Industries with the highest prevalence of neck pain** include Media & Arts (90%), Healthcare (80%), Students (80%), and IT—particularly among women, where prevalence reaches 83%.
- ⊙ **Working Position:**
 - Female workers who do a daily combination of 'seated and standing' work were 46% more likely to experience neck pain than their male colleagues (67.7% v 47%).
 - Women who engage in physical work were 20% more likely to experience neck pain than male coworkers (71.2% v 59.5%).

COVID-19 & Tech Neck

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, ACA chiropractors have reported a noticeable rise in Tech Neck cases across all age groups, **with teens and children the most affected:**

- ⊙ **Overall patients:** 24% of chiropractors saw a **significant increase** in Tech Neck presentations. 28% reported a **moderate increase**, while 20% saw **no change**.
- ⊙ **Teens:** 34% reported a **significant increase** in teen Tech Neck cases and 27% saw a **moderate increase**.
- ⊙ **Children:** 29% reported a **significant increase**, with another 25% noting a **moderate increase**.
- ⊙ **Adults:** Only 18% reported a **significant increase** in adult cases, though 33% still noted a **moderate rise**.

Chiropractic Healthcare

- ⊙ **37% of all respondents** and **44% of neck pain sufferers** had consulted a chiropractor.
- ⊙ **76.9%** of all chiropractic patients reported some level of relief.
- ⊙ Among those who saw a chiropractor specifically for neck pain:
 - **79%** experienced improvement; **31%** reported significant improvement; **11%** said their neck pain was completely resolved; **19%** noted their pain returns with triggers or without regular care; **17%** reported partial resolution and **9.5%** saw minimal improvement.
- ⊙ **73% of neck pain sufferers** had consulted a chiropractor for their condition.
- ⊙ **Gender outcomes:** **75% of women** and **77.5% of men** reported relief from chiropractic healthcare.

DR ALI YOUNG - Chiropractor

Dr Ali Young is a Chiropractor with over 20 years' experience working specifically with families, children and women. She has owned practices and worked in both Western Australia and Queensland, and loves taking care of those children that love that extra jolt of frivolity, playfulness and joy in their healthcare. She is an advocate for Working Mothers, with her book, *Work. Mama. Life* widely received upon its publication in 2022. She is a mother of two and now works with women in her Holistic Health Business space, combining these two great loves with her chiropractic work. She is a sought-after speaker, MC, and strategist for working mothers in the allied health space who both own businesses and want to live large whilst avoiding burnout. She has written for most major newspapers around Australia, has a podcast "Work Mama Life" with nearly 20,000 downloads, and provides support in the online space for women and mothers. She has been a chiropractic patient since she was 15 years old and thinks there is no greater gift than providing the support families need to allow their health to shine.

JOURNALIST NOTES

The Australian Chiropractors Association & Spinal Health Week

Established in 1938, the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) is the peak body representing chiropractors. The ACA promotes the importance of maintaining spinal health to improve musculoskeletal health through non-invasive, drug-free spinal health and lifestyle advice to help Australians of all ages lead and maintain healthy lives.

The ACA is the premier association for chiropractic in Australia. With around 3,000 members, the ACA is Australia's largest chiropractic health body and has taken a leadership role in promoting the importance of maintaining a healthy spine to improve the overall health and wellbeing of every Australian. ACA develops and promotes professional standards for chiropractors, has invested \$2.2 million to advance research in musculoskeletal health, builds evidence-based practice for chiropractic healthcare and actively promotes the importance of spinal health through its annual flagship campaign, national Spinal Health Week.

Every week 400,000 chiropractic healthcare consultations are creating well-adjusted Australians. With so many Australians visiting a chiropractor every week, chiropractors play an important role in improving the spinal health of everyday Australians.

National Spinal Health Week (26 May to 1 June 2025) is the initiative of the ACA, dedicated to improving the spinal health of all Australians through increasing awareness of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which currently costs the Australian economy over \$55.1 billion annually.

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