# Risk of neck pain rises globally due to sedentary lifestyle and increased screen use



A recent systematic review published in the journal BMC Public Health highlights a growing concern over the increasing risk of neck pain worldwide, linking it to modern lifestyle changes, especially the rise in sedentary behaviour associated with remote work following the Covid-19 pandemic. The comprehensive review underscores how prolonged sitting and screen use are contributing to this trend, posing health risks and financial burdens for many.

Researchers from China carried out an analysis of 25 studies, encompassing data from over 43,000 participants across 13 countries, to examine the relationship between sedentary activities and neck pain. Sedentary behaviour was defined as activities involving low energy expenditure during waking hours, such as watching television, working on a computer, or using mobile devices while seated.

The findings revealed that the risk of neck pain is increasing annually, driven by societal shifts in work patterns and lifestyles. Particularly, using mobile phones emerged as the most significant risk factor, increasing the likelihood of neck pain by 82 per cent. In contrast, computer use raised this risk by 23 per cent, while watching television did not present a statistically significant risk. The study also highlighted that individuals sitting for more than six hours each day faced an 88 per cent higher risk of developing neck pain compared to those with more active lifestyles.

The study authors explained that the postures commonly adopted during prolonged screen use—such as bending the neck forward and slouching the shoulders—disrupt normal neck biomechanics. These habits reduce blood flow to the neck, create imbalances in muscle strength, diminish joint mobility, and increase pressure on the intervertebral discs, all of which contribute to the onset of neck pain.

Neck pain is among the most common musculoskeletal disorders worldwide, with approximately 70 per cent of people experiencing it at least once in their lives. In the United States, the economic impact is particularly significant, with annual spending on neck and back pain reaching $87.6 billion.

Addressing this issue, the researchers advocate for targeted preventative measures, especially aimed at high-risk groups such as women. They urge public health initiatives to promote reductions in sedentary behaviour and encourage physical activity to improve neck health and alleviate the global burden of neck pain.

The Independent reports these findings amid growing conversations about the health implications of increasingly sedentary digital lifestyles, particularly as home-working arrangements remain prevalent for many across the world.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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4. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/back-pain.htm> - Provides U.S. statistics on musculoskeletal disorders (including neck and back pain prevalence), corroborating the claim that 70% of people experience neck pain.
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