

### Professional Care of:

- Musculoskeletal Injuries
- Back, pelvis & neck problems
- Sports Injuries
- Headaches
- Knee problems/ injuries
- Shoulder problems/ injuries
- Women's Health

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## TEWANTIN PHYSIOTHERAPY AND SPORTS INJURY CENTRE

## Kids + Technology

At least 70% of Australia's school students use computers. As a result of this increased usage, Physiotherapists are treating more young patients suffering from the effects of working at computer stations that are either designed for adults or poorly designed for children. Many children are already suffering from repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and chronic pain in the hands, back, neck and shoulders.

Your back has 3 natural curves, cervical, thoracic and lumbar; they rely on proper posture to maintain these curves. Good posture remains crucial from childhood into adulthood, because the proper alignment allows your spine to do what it was designed to do. When the three curves aren't supported properly, muscles and ligaments must do the work the spine should be doing. This, in turn, puts stress on those over-taxed body parts.

**Emphasis needs to be placed on teaching children how to properly use computer workstations. Poor work habits and computer workstations that don't fit a child's body during the developing years can have harmful physical effects that can last a lifetime. Parents need to be just as concerned about their children's interaction with their computer workstations as they are with any activities that may affect their children's long-term health.**

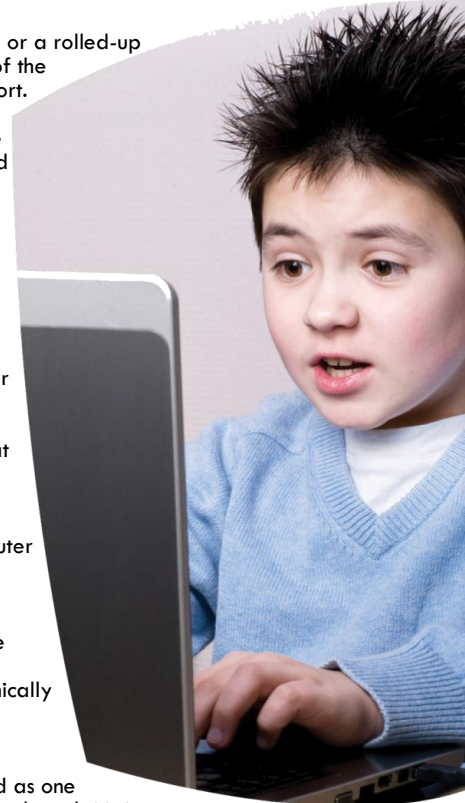
To reduce the possibility of your child suffering painful and possibly disabling injuries, Physiotherapists suggest the following tips:

- If children and adults in your home share the same computer workstation make certain that the workstation can be modified for each child's use.
- Position the computer monitor so the top of the screen is at or below the child's eye level. This can be accomplished by taking the computer off its base or stand, or having the child sit on firm pillows or phone books to reach the desired height.
- Make sure the chair at the workstation fits the child correctly.

An ergonomic back cushion, pillow or a rolled-up towel can be placed in the small of the child's back for added back support. There should be 2 inches between the front edge of the seat and the back of the knees. The chair should have arm supports so that elbows are resting within a 70 to 135 degree angle to the computer keyboard.

- The child's knees should be positioned at an approximate 90 to 120 degree angle. To accomplish this angle, feet can be placed on a foot rest, box, stool or similar object.
- Reduce eyestrain by making sure there is adequate lighting and that there is no glare on the monitor screen. Use an antiglare screen if necessary.
- Limit your child's time at the computer and make sure he or she takes periodic stretch breaks during computing time.
- Urge your child's school to provide education on correct computer ergonomics and to install ergonomically correct workstations.

Additionally, postural abnormalities in adolescent years have been recognised as one of the sources of pain syndromes and early arthritis in adulthood. Therefore, posture should be checked and corrected in children before more serious problems can occur.



## S-T-R-E-T-C-H Of The Month

### The Overarm Stretch

1. The overarm stretch is a straightforward and effective stretch that should be done in a standing position with both feet together if possible.
2. Simply have your child reach with their arms above the head and chin and neck lifted, as high as possible without adjusting their stance and hold for a few seconds.
3. The stretch can also be done using one arm at a time.
4. Once held for a few seconds, slowly come back to your starting position and repeat.



## TOWARDS WELLNESS

### Healthy Habits for Children

Instilling these healthy eating habits in your children will ensure they develop into healthy adults.

**Drink water** - Make water the drink of choice at meal times, and keep juice and other sweet drinks as 'sometimes' food, not 'everyday' food.

**Eat breakfast** - Even if it's just a banana and a glass of milk, teach your children that some food in their stomach in the morning kick-starts the body, making it easier to be healthy, happy and full of lasting energy throughout the day.

**Eat slowly** - It takes about 20 minutes for the message that they are full to get from their stomachs to their brains.

**Sit at the table to eat** - There's a time to play, a time to work, a time to rest and a time to eat. It not only reduces snacking, it also teaches social skills, such as table manners, how to use cutlery and how to wait your turn to talk.

**Choose healthy snacks** - Stock your house with healthier snacks like fruit, air-popped popcorn, unsalted nuts and yoghurt.

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