

SPRING UPDATE

STRAIGHTEN UP, CANADA!!

Your mother always told you not to stare at a screen for too long because it would ruin your eyes. It turns out, it's doing a lot more than that. As people are using more screen-based technology (computers, smart phones, tablets, etc.), health professionals, particularly chiropractors, are seeing a large increase in problems like headaches, neck pain, back pain, and even pain felt in the face.

Why exactly are these gadgets causing a problem? People's posture is often *horrible* while they use them. Heads forward, eyes cast down, shoulders forward – these can all spell bad news.

Staring at a screen often takes your head off the vertical, bending it forward up to 45° – **moving your head forward just an inch increases the pressure on your neck by 10 pounds.**

Sitting with your shoulders forward causes tightness in both the pectoral and back muscles – **it can also compress the veins and nerves of the arms which increases the chances of problems like carpal tunnel syndrome.**

Getting rid of technology is not going to happen, so what can you do? Seeing a massage therapist can help with tightness and pain, as well as regular acupuncture and chiropractic treatment to keep your spine aligned, keep you functional movement pain free, and to minimize forces that can lead to long term pain.

To really fix the problem though, you'll need to actively work on your posture. Stretches and exercises to strengthen your muscles are essential. The Canadian Chiropractic Association has started a great video series of exercises for just this purpose.

[Straighten Up Canada Video Series](#)



It's time to Straighten Up Canada and improve your spinal health!

Canada's chiropractors have developed an **app** for that. **Straighten Up Canada** is a **FREE**, easy-to-perform posture program that you can use in just three minutes a day.

It's the only free Canadian app specifically designed and completely dedicated to improving posture and spinal health.

The Straighten Up Canada program can be practised almost anywhere and is a great warm up, cool down, stand-alone routine or ergonomic break.

Good posture will help you to:

- Look and feel even better than you already do;
- Prevent back aches and muscle pains;
- Decrease wear and tear on your joints;
- Use less energy for daily tasks; and
- Increase your spine's flexibility and resilience.

Straighten Up Canada app features:

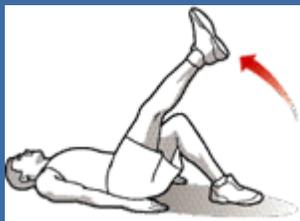
- 12 unique posture exercises
- Adult and youth exercise options
- Easy to follow image stills and video content
- Tracking function - Set personal reminders and track your progress
- Share your posture exercise progress with friends through social media
- Learn about your back and common back-related problems
- Read the latest blog posts about MSK Health



PATELLOFEMORAL PAIN SYNDROME



Hamstring Stretch: Stand in front of a chair, bench, or high step and place your left heel on it. Keep your back straight and lean forward from the hips until you feel a stretch down the back of the leg. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds, switch sides, and repeat. Perform two or three stretches per leg.



Straight Leg Lifts: Lie down, bend your left knee, and plant your left foot on the ground. Take two to four seconds to raise and lower your right leg (30 to 60 degrees), keeping the knee relatively straight with a slight bend. Do 10 repetitions, switch legs, and repeat the sequence to complete one set. Work up to 10 sets of 10 reps each.

Well Spring is here and so is running season. Here's an interesting excerpt from Runner's World:

"Forty-two percent of all **overuse injuries affect the knee joint**, and patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS), or simply "**runner's knee**," is the most common overuse injury among runners.

It occurs when a mis-tracking kneecap (patella) irritates the femoral groove in which it rests on the thighbone (femur). Pinpointing a single cause is difficult, says Stephen Pribut, DPM, a sports podiatrist who specializes in running injuries. It could be a biomechanical problem—the patella may be larger on the outside than it is on the inside, it may sit too high in the femoral groove, or it may dislocate easily. Also, worn cartilage in the knee joint reduces shock absorption, high-arched feet provide less cushioning, and flat feet or knees that turn in or out excessively can pull the patella sideways.

There are also muscular causes. Tight hamstring and calf muscles put pressure on the knee, and weak quadriceps muscles can cause the patella to track out of alignment. Just the repetitive force of a normal running stride alone can be enough to provoke an attack.

PFPS can affect one or both knees. It strikes mostly younger, recreational runners and twice as many women as men, according to the British Journal of Sports Medicine; women tend to have wider hips, resulting in a greater angling of the thighbone to the knee, which puts the kneecap under more stress.

Symptoms include tenderness behind or around the patella, usually toward its center. You may feel pain toward the back of the knee, a sense of 'cracking' in the knee, or that the knees giving out. Steps, hills, and uneven terrain can all aggravate PFPS.

To prevent PFPS, run on softer surfaces, keep mileage increases less than 10 percent per week, and gradually increase hill work in your program. Visit a specialty running shop to make sure you're wearing the proper shoes for your foot type and gait. Also, strengthening your quadriceps will improve patellar tracking, and stretching your hamstrings and calves will prevent over-pronation.

At the first sign of pain, cut back your mileage. The sooner you lessen the knee's workload, the faster healing begins, says Pribut. Avoid knee-bending activities, inclined surfaces, and downward stairs and slopes until the pain subsides. As you rebuild mileage, use a smaller stride on hills. Consider orthotics if new shoes do not fix the problem. "If your feet have good form, your knees will follow," says Pribut. See a doctor if the pain persists, to rule out another condition. Work these moves into your routine to help prevent runner's knee"

BIKE FIT BASICS

Whether you ride on-road or off, pedal casually or competitively, it's important to pay close attention to how your bicycle fits your body. A properly fitted bike will allow you to ride comfortably and safely, avoid injury, and produce more power, so you go faster with the same or less effort. In general, when fitting a bicycle, there are five basic components to consider:

1. Frame size
2. Saddle (seat) height
3. Saddle position
4. Saddle tilt
5. Handlebar position

Frame Size

Frame size is perhaps **the most important** of all measurements because once you purchase the bike, there are very few—if any—minor adjustments that can affect the overall frame. Frame size is not necessarily dependent on your height; rather, it is more a matter of leg length. Simply, the frame should be easily straddled with both feet flat on the ground, and with perhaps an inch or two of clearance.

- For a road or hybrid bike, you should have an inch or two of clearance between your crotch and the top tube.
- For a mountain bike, clearance should be about four inches—especially if you plan to ride in rugged terrain where an unplanned dismount is likely.

Saddle Height

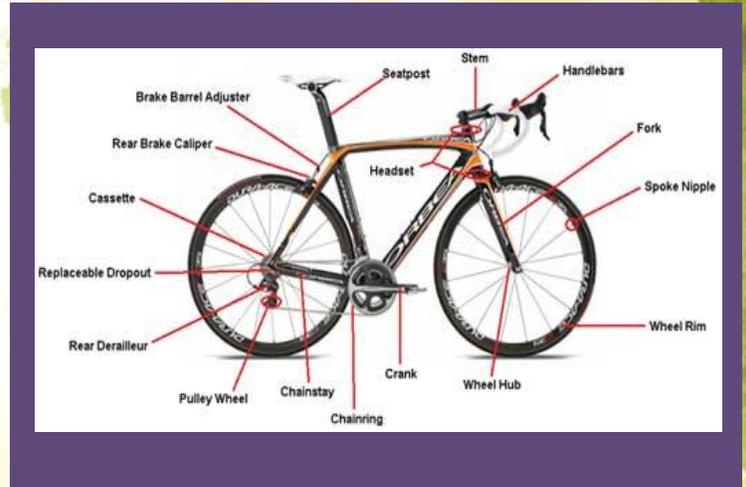
A saddle (seat) set too high or too low can cause pain and lead to injuries of the back and knees, and it will also affect the efficiency of each pedal stroke. As a starting point, set the saddle height so that your knee is slightly bent when the pedal is at its lowest position and the ball of your foot is on the pedal. It is recommended to make adjustments in very small increments and, if applicable, to wear your cycling shoes during the adjustment process.

Saddle Position

To check the saddle position, sit on your bicycle—using a friend or a stationary object to keep yourself balanced—and rotate your pedals until they are horizontal (at the 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions). If your saddle is positioned properly, your forward knee should be directly over the respective pedal axle (with the ball of your foot on the pedal). For precise measurement, use a plumb-bob to help you visualize the alignment. If adjustments are needed, loosen the seat post and slide the saddle forward or backward, keeping the seat level.

Saddle Tilt and Design

Generally speaking, your saddle should be level. Check this adjustment by using a carpenter's level balanced on the saddle while the bike is on level ground. If your saddle tips too much in either direction, pressure will be placed on your arms, shoulders, and lower back.



Handlebar Position and Distance

Handlebar setup is a matter of personal preference because it will affect shoulder, neck, and back comfort. Generally, handlebars are positioned higher for comfort (a more upright riding position) and lower for improved aerodynamics.

Always Wear a Helmet!

A bicycle crash can happen at any time; however, according to the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, a properly fitted bicycle helmet reduces the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent. The following are tips to help ensure the correct helmet fit:

- The helmet should be level on the head, and it must cover the forehead.
- The Y of the side straps should meet just below the ear.
- The chin strap should be snug against the chin so that when you open the mouth very wide, the helmet pulls down a little.
- Put your palm on the front of the helmet, and push up and back. If it moves more than an inch, more fitting is required.
- Shake your head around. If the helmet dislodges, work on the strap adjustments.
- Do not wear a hat under the helmet.
- All helmets sold in bike shops must be approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and should carry a CPSC sticker.

SPRING TIPS

Spring is in the air and here comes **SPRING CLEANING!!** Leaf cleanup, bulb planting, and grass mowing. You may enjoy yard work because it gets you outdoors and you can watch your yard transform with your efforts and creativity. **But you may also dread it because it leaves you with back pain, headaches and a stiff neck.**

Some steps you can take to avoid potential back injury while working in your yard this spring are: **Stretch.** Before you head outside take some time to stretch your arms, legs, neck and back. While you may not be preparing for a marathon you are preparing for something you do not actively participate in every day. Warming up your muscles before you dig in, literally, can help keep stiffness at bay and help you avoid potential injuries from digging, lifting, and carrying heavy or awkward items. **Pace Yourself.**

Quite often pulled muscles land individuals at the chiropractor's office. Sudden movements where you may be jerking on a heavy load or tree limb can leave you in pain. Take your time and assess what you are getting ready to pick up or move. If the item is too heavy or large, then ask for help. Otherwise, take your time when removing the item. Lift with your legs, arms, and back as one unit. Rest and Regroup.

There's no arguing that even a small yard can take several days to clean up, prep, and plant in preparation for springtime. Instead of trying to build Rome in one day, take your time and enjoy these final days of winter and early days of spring. When you're feeling tired, rest. And remember to stay hydrated. You may not be sweating much but you still need hydration. Dehydrated muscles are much more likely to encounter injury. Nothing says spring like a little sunshine and yard work. Take your time and get your loved ones involved. This will lighten your burden and make it more enjoyable at the same time.



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