

Smart phone posturing: Lie on your side to avoid aches and pain

February 28 2020, by David Bradley



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It's perhaps the news lazy phone users have been dreaming of. Researchers have demonstrated that lying on your side and holding your phone is the best posture to avoid pain and problems in the upper back,

arms and wrists.

Writing in the *International Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics*, a team from South Korea investigated whether phone use while sitting, lying on one's back or lying on one's side was more or less likely to lead to problems in the upper extremities of the musculoskeletal system. The team recruited thirty healthy young adults and instructed them to type on a smartphone for five minutes at a time and to have a five-minute rest. They used electromyography to measure [muscle response](#) in different postures and measured wrist and elbow joint angles during use.

Different muscles were more active in different positions but were highest in the sitting position and the joint angles were suggestive of greater strain in this [posture](#). Using the phone while lying on one's side demonstrated a neutral wrist angle, so better alignment, in contrast, and the least muscular activity. As such, the team recommends phone users will be more comfortable and suffer less from problems of the upper musculoskeletal system if they lie on their sides while using their phones. Of course, the demands of the workplace, [public transport](#), and other circumstances may preclude this more relaxing posture.

The next step, of course, will be to persuade [phone](#) users to not use the phones while walking to prevent pedestrian collisions and the development of a stoop.

More information: Han Yeong Yun et al. Exploratory study on adequacy of upper extremity position during smartphone usage, *International Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/IJHFE.2019.105362](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJHFE.2019.105362)

Provided by Inderscience

Citation: Smart phone posturing: Lie on your side to avoid aches and pain (2020, February 28)
retrieved 18 April 2023 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-02-smart-posturing-side-aches-pain.html>

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