

Wait—That Can Cause Pain?



We all feel pain at some point. And while we can often pinpoint the source of our discomfort, the answer may not always be so obvious. If you're suffering from pain and you aren't sure why, consider your everyday items and activities. From our choice of shoes to what we do on the weekends, sometimes our simple daily decisions may be the culprit.

WARDROBE MALFUNCTIONS

When we wake up in the morning, it's not very likely that we're thinking about how painful our shoes or accessories are going to be when we're getting ready for the day ahead. However, it's possible that paying attention to what we put on our body or carry around with us could prevent problems a few hours later.

Take our shoes for example. It's well-known that high heels can cause pain, but few people realize that flip-flops may just be worse. They offer almost no arch support, which can lead to pain not only in all areas of the foot, but the ankles and knees as well. Reserve the flip-flops for the beach or pool and wearing shoes with

better arch support for everyday use.

While they're meant for our convenience, our everyday accessories can often lead to inconvenient pain. Sure, that wallet may prevent you from misplacing your credit card, but it can also hurt your back. Placing your wallet in your back pocket, especially while sitting, can place unnecessary pressure on the sciatic nerve, causing pain in both the back and legs. The easiest way to prevent this is by removing your wallet before getting in your car or taking a seat.

A DAY AT THE OFFICE

While many of us may say it in a joking manner, sometimes our jobs can literally be "a pain." For example, if your desk chair is positioned poorly, it may cause you to slouch, straining your back and neck. A computer monitor placed anywhere but eye level pulls on the muscles in the neck, creating neck pain. The best way to alleviate this workstation discomfort is by making a few minor adjustments.

Adjust your chair so you can sit upright while placing your feet comfortably on the floor, and place your computer screen at eye level. Rearranging your office space can make a big difference if you often suffer from pain in your back or neck.

The computer keyboard is another workplace culprit. Without proper positioning, it can not only cause everyday finger and wrist pain, it can lead to a more serious problem. Repetitive motion, such as typing on a keyboard, can cause a nerve problem called carpal tunnel. To avoid this, adjust your keyboard by tilting it to keep your wrists and arms in alignment.

WEEKEND PLANS

You've worked all week and now it's time for some relaxation. But even your leisure time can cause pain if you don't do it properly. If you slouch or lounge on the sofa with your neck turned toward the television, your back and neck may not be as relaxed as the rest of you. Try to maintain proper posture even during your R&R.

For many people, the weekends are less about lounging and more about enjoying those things you can't while in the office eight hours a day.

If you like to engage in more physical activities on the weekends, be careful if you've been sedentary in the office all week.

If your muscles aren't prepared for the level of activity, they are more likely to suffer strains. Make sure to stretch your muscles and start with a lighter activity to warm-up. Also, by exercising regularly, your muscles will be better prepared for more strenuous activity on the weekends.

So before you slip on those flip-flops or start entering data on that keyboard, remember that they may cause more discomfort than you would like. But with a few minor adjustments, these surprising pain triggers won't have to be a pain in your life. ■

The information for this Handout was provided by Charles Friedman, DO, pain specialist at Pain Relief Centers in Pinellas Park. Pain Relief Centers are multi-specialty practices that use a combination of innovative and minimally invasive treatments that help relieve patients' pain and improve their quality of life.

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