

Hong Kong's biggest circulation English daily

The 英文虎報 Standard

Tuesday, May 29, 2012

Volume 5, No 175

www.thestandard.com.hk

iPain alert on smart tools

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The iPad and iPhone may be the trendiest gadgets to own but spending too much time with them can lead to severe neck and back problems, anesthesiologist Carina Li Ching-fan warns.

An online poll of 1,532 people, aged 18 and above, showed that nearly 95 percent of the respondents have had such pains during the past 12 months.

The Hong Kong Multisports Association, which conducted the survey from April 23 to May 6, said one out of three use their devices for more than four hours

a day while 57 percent do the same on their computers.

Seven out of 10 are white-collar workers, managers and professionals who spend long hours working on desktop or notebook computers and on their tablets or smartphones.

Half of those polled said they have experienced severe pain, which adversely affects their work, sleep quality, mood and concentration.

Li, the association's honorary medical adviser, added one of the main reasons for the growing incidence of chronic back and neck pains is people using their

devices for long periods and maintaining a wrong posture — including keeping their heads down.

“Many people use desktop computers during their work hours, then go on to use tablets and smartphones after work,” she said. “Based on the survey results, we inferred they could be spending five or even eight hours a day on these devices.”

Hong Kong Medical Association president Gabriel Choi Kin said: “If a person bows down his head all the time and types and watches a small screen, it can cause chronic eye pain.



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“And if your fingers have to type on the keyboard all the time, you will have wrist and finger problems.”

Li advised people to stretch every hour or so and exercise for 30 minutes at least twice a week.

Lisa Cheng Lai-sho, the so-called “Hong Kong Spider Woman” and

reigning bun scrambling champion, and former Hong Kong triathlon athlete Sunny Tang Chun-wai yesterday demonstrated simple back and stretching exercises that can help those who use gadgets prevent the onset of chronic pain.

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