

BLACKBERRY INFORMATION LEAFLET

What are the musculoskeletal risks associated with using your Blackberry?

1. Repetition: Use of the Blackberry keypad involves repetitive movement, usually carried out by the thumbs only. This can result in fatigue and may lead to discomfort if not controlled. Keep use of the keyboard to a minimum.
2. Awkward Posture: It is important that awkward postures are not adopted whilst using your Blackberry. Think of the position of your thumb, fingers and wrist but also remember your elbows, shoulders, neck and back.
3. Force: Using any of the functions on you Blackberry with excessive force will lead to unnecessary strain on your upper limbs. Keep your touch light.
4. Duration: The longer you use your Blackberry, the more likely you are to fatigue. So keep this to a minimum.



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How can I avoid musculoskeletal problems when using my Blackberry?

1. Keep keypad use to a minimum.

- a) Avoid long sessions of keying. Try ^[SEP]not to use the keypad for more than 10 minutes without taking a break to change your posture.
- b) Don't do all your emails in one long session. Alternate calls and emails.
- c) If you have the choice, always use your desktop to do your email.
- d) Avoid replying to messages with lengthy responses. Keep them brief or telephone with a verbal response.



2. Operate your Blackberry using good postures and movements.

- a) Hold the Blackberry in a relaxed grip with the fingers curled around the back
- b) The keyboard is designed for thumbs. Your thumbs are much stronger than your fingers so it makes sense to use them. By using your thumbs you also place your wrist in a more neutral posture, which is better.
- c) Keep your left and right thumb on the respective sides of the keypad – this reduces overstretching.
- d) Keep your keystroke as light as possible, using smooth movements.
- e) Rest your thumbs lightly on the surface when you are not keying; avoid holding them up in the air.

- f) There is no rule when it comes to operating the side button and scroll wheel. This will depend on whether you are right or left handed (there are no left handed Blackberry's), the size of your hand and other factors. The important thing is to avoid awkward postures. Thumbs and index fingers seem most popular.
3. It is very important to think about the posture of the rest of your body when using your Blackberry:
- a) Neck: Avoid bending your neck for long periods to see the screen.
 - b) Spine: Sit sensibly. Ideally, your spine should be well supported in an s-shape posture.
 - c) Shoulders: Keep your upper arms along the side of your body. This means you should hold your Blackberry close to avoid reaching.
 - d) Elbows: Your elbows should be bent to about ninety degrees or a little more to bring the screen up towards your face, thus reducing neck bending.
3. Keep your screen clean. 
4. Avoid reflection on your screen by re-positioning yourself.

Practical tips for using your Blackberry

1. Set up auto text
2. Set up predictive text
3. Use keyboard shortcuts
4. Set up your calendar for easy viewing

Keyboard shortcuts for the Blackberry

Messaging

- instantly compose messages [press and hold 'C']
- reply ['R']
- reply all ['L']
- forward ['F']
- two spaces create a period for a new sentence

Navigation

- to scroll up [Shift + Space]
- to scroll down [space]
- go to the top of a message ['T']
- go to the bottom of a seemingly endless thread ['B']
- proceed to the next date ['N']
- go back to the previous date ['P']
- go to the next unopened message ['U']

Calendar

If Calendar users adhere to the default 'Day' view, though, the options will need to be updated in order for the quick keys to work properly. To change the settings, open the Calendar, press the BlackBerry menu button and select 'Calendar Options.' Then, choose 'General Options,' scroll down to the 'Actions' section and set the 'Enable Quick Entry' box to "No." If users opt for the 'Agenda,' 'Week' or 'Month' views, the settings do not need to be changed.

- swap to 'Agenda' mode ['A']
- bring up 'Day' ['D']
- switch to 'Week' ['W']
- cue the 'Month' perspective ['M']
- schedule appointments ['C']
- move to the next day, week or month ['Space'] (depending upon the view)
- scroll back through the previous day, week or month ['Space + Shift']
- move the Calendar back to the current date ['T']
- jump to a specific, selected date ['J']

Are there other risks associated with prolonged and poor use of my Blackberry?

Yes. Unhealthy usage of the Blackberry may increase the risk of visual strain and/or fatigue. This can lead to dry eyes or sore eyes. The effects of



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unhealthy usage of your Blackberry can be compounded by unhealthy usage of your desktop PC/laptop or an unbalanced lifestyle.