

Healthy Working MOVE

HANDY HINTS AND TIPS FOR USING A TABLET OR SMARTPHONE

As tablets and smartphones continue to become ever more popular there is very little advice available for their safe use. Given the popularity of these devices with children this is a potentially worrying thought. The ease of use and convenience of these devices for carrying out a wide range of different tasks means that the amount of time children spend using them each day will continue to rise.

This tip sheet offers advice on how children can use these devices safely and comfortably.

At a desk

- Make sure the desk and adjustable chair is set-up correctly so that your child can sit with their feet flat on the floor or supported so that their knees are slightly lower than their hips and their elbows.
- Using a tablet flat on a desk can encourage an unhealthy neck posture. Use a stand to raise it up. An angle of about 45° is best to watch films or tv. An angle of about 30° is best for typing.

Sitting on comfy furniture

- Furniture, such as a sofa, molds to the body but offers little support to maintain a good posture. Encourage your child to change their position and take regular breaks from their device.
- If your child's arms drop too low using a tablet or smartphone it forces them to bend their neck further to see the screen. To prevent this put a cushion or two on their lap to support their arms and keep the device in a more elevated position. This is also a good tip for when your child uses their device sitting on the floor.



Sitting on the floor

- Sitting positions where the knees are level or lower than the hips are best. When your knees are higher than your hips you naturally lean forward over arching your back to keep balanced.
- Side sitting or sitting with legs straight out are healthier sitting positions for your child.
- Encourage your child to move around and change positions regularly.

Laying down

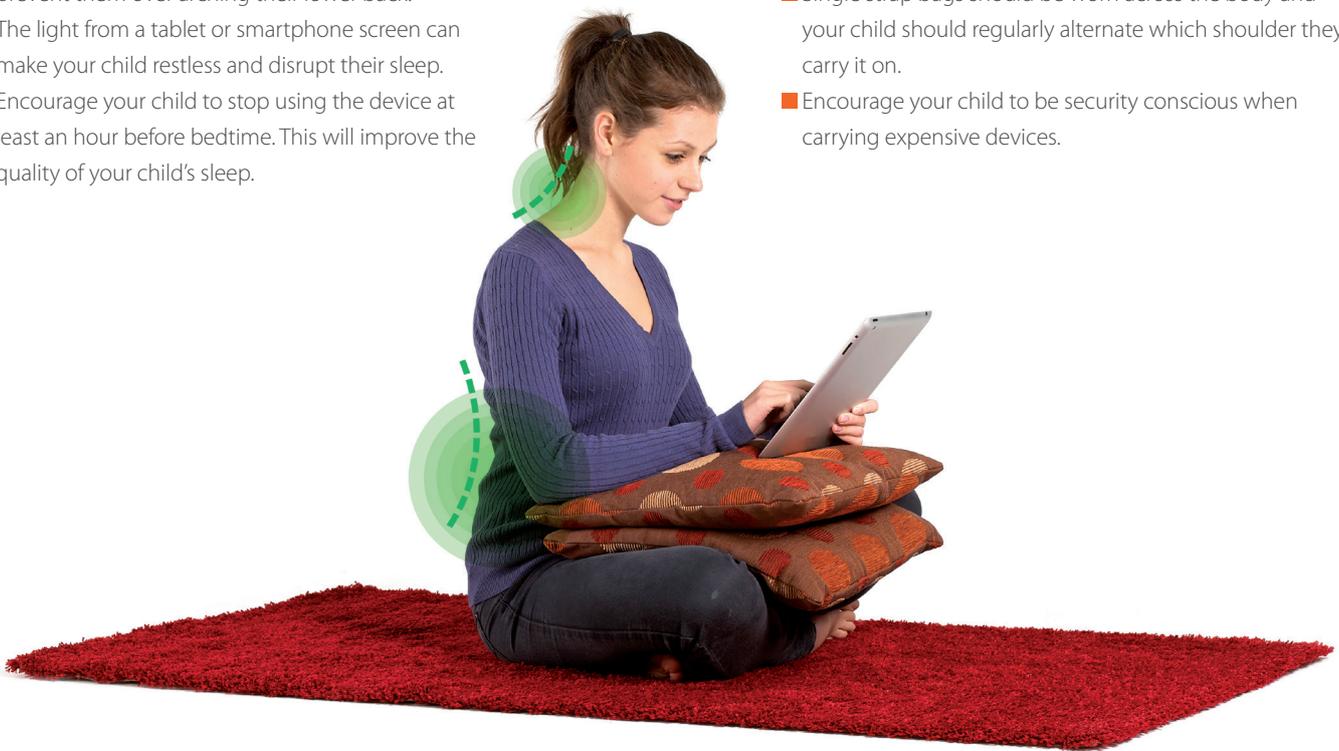
- When your child uses a device lying on their front give them a cushion to place under their chest to support their weight and prevent them over arching their lower back.
- The light from a tablet or smartphone screen can make your child restless and disrupt their sleep. Encourage your child to stop using the device at least an hour before bedtime. This will improve the quality of your child's sleep.

Standing up

- Advise your child not to send text messages or use a device while walking as this could lead to serious accidents and injury. Instead of sending a text message why not make a call instead as this is also less intensive on the muscles and tendons in their fingers.

Carrying a tablet or smartphone

- Children should try to minimise the amount of weight they carry around. Pack heavier items so that they will be closest to their back when the bag is worn
- Rucksacks should be worn with a tightened but comfortable strap over each shoulder.
 - Single strap bags should be worn across the body and your child should regularly alternate which shoulder they carry it on.
 - Encourage your child to be security conscious when carrying expensive devices.



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