

## How can back health and posture be improved in lessons using ICT and technology?

The incidence of back pain in primary-aged children is rising for many reasons, one contributing factor may be the growth of mobile technology and its effects on growing, developing spines. Technology can encourage sedentary behavior, unhealthy habits and flexed, uncomfortable postures. To offer truly safe and healthy ICT and technology use in schools, it's good to consider the following:

### Ideas to help

- When purchasing tablet equipment, factor in for a protective case with a stand or raise the tablet up so it is at an angle for viewing and typing. If used on a flat desk, a damaging, curved posture will be encouraged.



Unhealthy, flexed posture. Back and neck muscles working hard to support the head with repetitive neck movements when looking up at teacher and then back down at screen. Reduced circulation as pressure behind knees.



Improved spinal alignment, healthier sitting with a tablet stand. Improves circulation, digestion, comfort and energy flow.

- Laptops maybe more portable but best practice suggests children and adults should **use computers with the top of the screen level with their eyes**. If using a laptop on a flat desk or table, raise the screen (on books or a stand) and use a separate keyboard and mouse. This applies at home too.



## A JOLLY BACK IS A HEALTHY BACK

- Can children learn to touch type? This reduces repetitive neck movements when looking between the keyboard and the screen and benefits computer users hugely, especially longer term. There are some great free online courses.
- Participate in and share the new free **Health Working MOVE** eLearning course. Developed by Cardinus Risk Management in conjunction with the Health & Safety Laboratory. Healthy Working Move explains to young people how using electronic devices, carrying school bags and adopting different postures when working and relaxing can affect their bodies. It teaches them how to use technology in a healthy, comfortable and safe way. There are versions for 7-11 years, 12-17 years and post-18. There are also free advice sheets for teachers and parents to download. It takes about 20mins to complete and can be accessed via [www.ergonomics4kids.com](http://www.ergonomics4kids.com). Can this link be placed on your school website for pupils and families to access at home?

All the best and as always if we can help further, we'd love to hear from you,  
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