



**UPPER CROSS SYNDROME** - a bad posture that is usually the result of too much sitting and slouching with the head forward, especially nowadays with texting and cell phones. The resultant posture is a head that is too far in front of the body and a cervical spine (neck) that is flattened in the lower area and hyperextended in the upper vertebrae. The thoracic (upper back) is also hyperflexed, leading to a rounded upper back.

### Causes

- Lower crossed syndrome
- Prolonged sitting or standing, especially slouching, looking down at a desk, resting the chin on a hand, or reclining backwards in a chair while looking straight ahead or down.
- Improper exercise habits, i.e. lat pulls behind the head, sit-ups while pushing the chin forward, too much chest and not enough upper back strengthening, lack of stretching the appropriate areas, lifting too heavy and improper breathing techniques.
- Heavy backpacks worn low on the back
- Sleeping, watching T.V., or reading supine with too tall a pillow behind the head
- Being tall and always looking down

### Corrective Actions

Use arms rests.

Tilt head down instead of moving entire head forward when reading or looking down.

Correct any other major posture faults.

Correct any detrimental habits, i.e. resting chin on hand(s) while at desk

Sit towards the back of the chair with the buttocks and low back up against the back of the chair, this forces a more natural curve in the spine.

Sit straight up instead of leaning back in chairs, otherwise head has to tilt down to look straight

### Consequences

- Neck and shoulder pain
- Headaches
- Cervical joint dysfunctions
- Altered shoulder joint mechanics
- TMJ
- Altered neck flexion patterns
- Thoracic outlet syndrome
- Cervical strains
- Pseudo-carpal tunnel syndrome
- Trigger points in many areas
- Difficulty relaxing due to impaired breathing
- Rotator cuff strains or tears