



# HIGH-TECH INJURIES

## EASY WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BODY

BY GERRIE SUMMERS

**M**odern day technology, especially those convenient Smartphones, and tablets, has made our lives more comfortable and efficient. But, like everything, it comes at a price. And the price, unfortunately, is more than just paying \$600 for a phone! With all of this modern technology comes increased incidences of carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition caused by repetitive stress injuries to the wrists and hands.

The continuous use of these devices without enough respites, has also created even more repetitive stress injuries like “tech neck,” “texting thumb,” and “trigger thumb.” Yes, those are *real* conditions. Tech neck causes upper back, lower back and shoulder pain from slouching over the laptop or Smartphone. Just look away from your computer for a moment to think about it. The human head can weigh anywhere between 5 to 10 pounds. Imagine how much stress just the act of leaning forward for several minutes puts on your neck, causing headaches, pinched nerves, and other problems. Counter this with bad posture and you will often experience a misaligned spine and upper back pain. That’s just the beginning.

In addition, being hunched over using Smartphones to read emails, check social media and read/send texts, not only strains the neck, it causes overuse of the thumb (texting thumb or trigger thumb)—inflammation, discomfort and cramping of the thumb, which often causes pain in the lower part of the hand.

Enrique Ramirez



## TAKE A BREAK

Enrique Ramirez, founder and lead esthetician at **Face to Face Spa**, sees clients come in with computer- and tech-related issues. "I've seen many," Ramirez confirms, "but the most common is carpal tunnel syndrome repetitive movement and bad hand positioning." These issues have made the *Rubbing Express*, a 30-minute Swedish massage to target knots or specific areas of the body, particularly popular. Requests to focus on the neck, shoulders, wrists, and hands, often come from those individuals whose jobs have them arched over the computer, using repetitive hand motions at the keyboard for hours on end.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is often first noticed by tingling, numbness and sometimes pain due to the improper positioning of the wrist while typing on a keyboard. This causes pressure on the hand's tunnel-like median nerve. Sometimes the pain or numbness runs from the hand up the arm. And like most of us, taking a break is not on the top of the list. But it's necessary. Even for a few moments, it's important to stretch the hands.

"I also see neck and shoulder pain from long days at work hunched over the computer," adds Ramirez. Bending the neck to look at the computer screen can strain the muscles along the backside of the neck. Improper seated positions or even using the wrong workplace chair can lead to lower back pain. Eventually, curvature of the spine will set in placing pressure on other parts of the body only to cause arthritis, muscular deformities, bone spurs, and nerve damage.

## POSTURE PERFECT

Mom was right when she told us to sit up straight. Also be sure to take breaks to avoid chronic pain from repetitive movements, as well as to prevent eye strain. Remember ears need to be lined up with your shoulders. "When folks get tired they tend to forget about posture, which then strains a lot of their back muscles."

Enrique suggests that clients ask that therapists target one specific area, for better results. "When clients come in for the *Rubbing Express* massage, I ask their troublesome areas to focus on those muscles to ease tightness and stress. For people with carpal tunnel, I do *Reflexology* on each hand to stretch tiny hand muscles and rearrange bone structure with manipulation to free the nerve that's pinched. Often I use paraffin to soften hands and melt tight hand muscles." And for those on their feet all day the *Reflexology Treatment* combines acupressure points and foot massage techniques to help relax the feet, thereby bringing the body into complete balance.



Face to Face NYC Spa



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## MORE PERKS FOR NYers

Getting a quick massage or other relaxing treatment, also does a lot to reduce stress and anxiety from work. Mental stress is not as evident as nerve pain in the wrist or lower back pain and tight shoulders. Studies have shown that massage can reduce the stress hormone cortisol and improve immune system function. In fact, a 30-minute massage once a week has been known to reduce stress, as well as improve brain function to help you think more clearly. You can get back to work refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to brainstorm.

Couple a massage with a menu of other treatments available. *The NY Minute Treatment* was specifically designed for "today's busy person" and combines mini-microdermabrasion with an oxygen mist to rejuvenate and brighten a tired, dull and lifeless face, which can be brought on by a polluted city environment, stress, and a lack of proper rest. And for those tired eyes spent in front of the computer the *Rejuvenating Eye Treatment* will decongest and reduce puffiness in no time.

With hectic schedules, many employees skip the lunch hour altogether, but as the concern for a more healthy (and therefore productive) work staff increases, more people (and bosses) are seeing the benefits of scheduling massage therapy and other treatments during lunch breaks.

As Enrique told us, "That's how we keep hard-working New Yorkers more productive!"

For more information on Face to Face NYC, visit [facetofacenyc.com](http://facetofacenyc.com). •