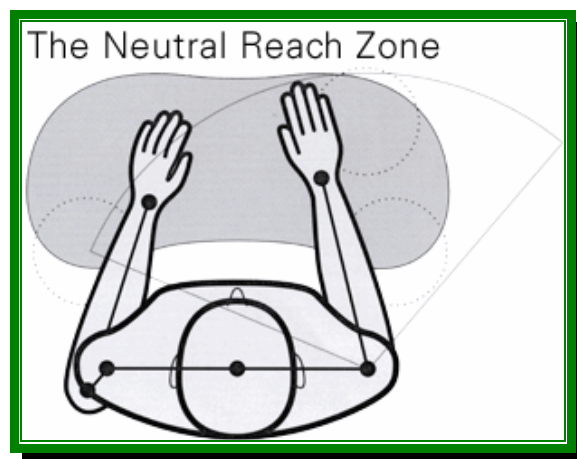




## TELEPHONE USE FACT SHEET

Recently the Health and Safety Team have noticed an increase in the number of staff developing neck and shoulder pain associated with telephone use. In most cases this has been caused by the person cradling the phone handset between their head and hunched shoulder, whilst trying to type/ write and talk simultaneously. This posture places a lot of stress on the muscles of the neck, upper back and shoulder. Use of the following hints will help create a safer work environment for those staff who use the phone on a regular basis:

1. Make sure that the base of the phone is positioned in your neutral reach zone, to minimise the amount of stress on your arms. The neutral reach zone is that area you can reach whilst sitting where your elbows can remain by your side. Repetitively reaching beyond this comfort zone to answer the phone (or indeed reach for anything you use on the desk regularly) can place stress on your arms and neck.



2. Make sure you hold the phone in a proper position against your ear - head straight (not cocked to one side) and shoulders relaxed (not hunched).
3. If you tend to use the phone for long durations, consider alternating ears and supporting the hand that is holding the phone on a regular basis. If your calls tend to be shorter, consider alternating ears and hands every other call.
4. For very long calls, or those where you are required to take notes and/or type at the same time consider using speaker phone. Cradling the phone between your shoulder and head (even for short periods) places stress on the muscles of your neck, shoulders and upper back, and can lead to discomfort, pain and injury. **Try to avoid this posture wherever possible.**
5. If you work in a noisy environment or are dealing with confidential matters, a headset is preferable to using speaker phone. Headsets can be easily installed onto any phone (however certain headsets are compatible with certain phones only). Please contact Brian McGregor at Telephones on X 17095 to check which headset is best suited to your phone system before ordering one.
6. Whilst it may seem strange at first, typically workers report that it only takes a matter of days to become accustomed to using a headset. Most headsets have a single earpiece - consider alternating ears to eliminate any discomfort that may be caused by continuous pressure on your ear.