

TIPS TO ENJOY HEALTHY KNITTING



Many of us turn to knitting to pass the time and can be a great exercise for those with hand pain. However, knitting is a repetitive motion and can lead to a variety of injuries, much like typing, sewing and other repetitive tasks. Knitting can cause strain not only on the hands and wrists, but also on the neck and upper back due to the extended length of time knitters are looking down at their work in a sitting position. Knitting can also lead to carpal tunnel syndrome related to improper wrist positioning and grip technique in serious cases.

The Ontario Chiropractic Association has compiled a few tips and techniques to help knitters enjoy their hobby free of pain and discomfort:

- The single most important thing a knitter can do to prevent injury is take frequent, regular breaks. Change the position of your body and look up often from your work and into the distance.
- Sit in a chair with your feet on the floor and try not to hunch. Try to engage your abdomen when adjusting your posture.
- Stretch your fingers by clenching your hands and then spreading your fingers as far as you can. Stretch and strengthen your wrists with simple curls. Lay your forearm on a flat surface with your wrist at the edge. While holding a small hand weight, let your wrist fall over the edge and then lift the weight up towards you only bending your wrist. The rest of your arm should remain flat on the table.
- Switch it up! Learning to switch easily between English and Continental knitting styles will allow you to keep on stitching while reducing the risk of repetitive strain.
- Sit in a comfortable but supportive chair and consider placing a small cushion, rolled up towel or sweater between your chair and the curve in the small of your low back.
- The tools you use matter. Consider smooth, lightweight needles. Circular needles are best for large projects. When crocheting, use ergonomic hooks.
- Make small, efficient movements. Practice how small you can make your movements. Keep the working yarn close to the tip of the needles.
- Grasp your yarn gently. A consistently relaxed grip will help you keep a constant gauge while reducing unnecessary strain on your neck, shoulders and forearms.
- Hold your projects away from you. This will help you relax and avoid muscle and eye strain.
- Plan your knitting projects in advance and try to space them out over time.

Any pain or stiffness resulting from knitting should not be ignored. Knitting should be a fun, relaxing hobby. Make sure that knitting is contributing to your wellbeing and health, not more injuries.