

TIP OF THE MONTH

Before your thumbs, hands or wrists get sore try these tips:

- Vary the digits you use for texting or typing emails.
- Switch hands periodically, both for texting and holding the phone.
- Don't type for more than a few minutes without taking a break.
- Keep your wrist straight when holding or typing on any device.

Call instead!! Avoid texting long conversations.



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**PHYSICAL THERAPY
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TO TEXT OR NOT TO TEXT

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Presented by:



**PHYSICAL THERAPY
ASSOCIATES OF SCHENECTADY, PC**

“Blackberry Thumb,” “Gamers Wrist,” “iPhonitis,” “TMI (Text Message Injuries).” It seems the media can’t come up with catchy names fast enough to describe the repetitive strain symptoms people are complaining about related to use of hand-held electronics! Texting, tapping iPhones, using Apps, typing on netbooks, video books and games have become a mainstay in our society, not only for personal use but for work-related tasks. They’ve also given us a new way to use, and **overuse** our hands.

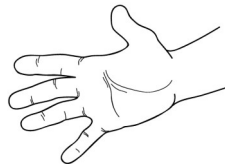
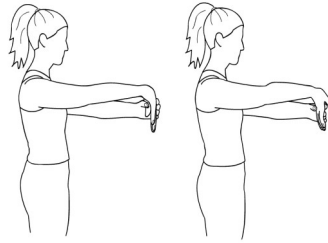
The hand is an intricate network of musculoskeletal structures – muscles, tendons, joints, ligaments, bones – that provide both dexterity and strength. Your thumb is designed to provide the stabilization necessary to pinch grip, but is not as dexterous as other fingers, and not used to the high repetition required for texting on most devices. Add to this the awkward wrist and upper body postures usually seen when people are using smaller electronic devices and the tendency to press harder on smaller keyboards. It’s a perfect set up to create the mechanical stresses and strains that can lead to overuse!

Instead of naming the discomfort and tendonitis issues related to this overuse, spend your time learning to prevent the overuse symptoms – pain, soreness, inflammation – associated with doing the same motion over and over again.

*Stretch your hands, wrists and arms periodically to maintain flexibility and circulation:

- Intertwine your fingers, turn your hands away from you and straighten your elbows in front of you. Hold 10 sec. Repeat same stretch with your arms over head.

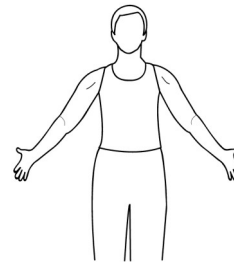
- With arm in front of you, elbow straight, palm facing down – bend wrist as far as possible applying a gentle stretch with opposite hand. Repeat with palm facing up and fingers pointing down toward floor. Hold 10 sec.



- Open hands and spread your fingers apart as far as possible. Touch the tip of each finger with your thumb.



- With palms facing forward and fingers open, raise arm to ~45° and press them back until a stretch is felt in the front of your upper arm and elbow. Hold 10 sec.



- Place your thumb inside of palm; fold your fingers over thumb. Keeping wrist aligned tip your hand down toward the pinky side of your hand stretching the thumb side of your wrist. Hold 10 sec.

*Keep wrists straight and elbows close to body during hand-held electronic use. Support your upper body whenever possible.

- Change position and move frequently to maintain circulation and decrease postural stress. Take a rest break from texting to rest hands periodically.
- Avoid looking down at devices for long periods to reduce strain on your neck and upper body. Good posture, good posture, good posture!
- Grip devices lightly and adjust touch pads to increase sensitivity so you don’t need to push as hard during texting and using apps.
- Gentle strengthening of muscles tendons may also help. Ask your Physical Therapist for safe exercise suggestions.



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