

Reading in bed may lead to neck problems

Question: Can reading in bed cause neck pain or headaches?

Answer: Reading in bed can lead to a gamut of potential problems if done incorrectly.

There are a few considerations and preparations you should make prior to reading in bed and even then you are more prone to irritation of your spine than if you did not read in bed.

First, you should not be in a slouched position without firm low-back support. Leaning against the headboard, if you have one, is not considered a firm support because your spine is still pushed forward without the lumbar lordosis, (forward curve) being stable. Also, the angle of the legs to the low back is very sharp causing weight bearing to generate to the low back or shoulders. To compensate putting a small pillow behind the lordosis in your low back and/or putting a pillow under your knees will change the angle of pressure on your spine, redistributing weight bearing more evenly.

Secondly, your head position while you read in bed will affect your neck dramatically. A downwardly flexed head and neck will irritate your neck muscles and the back of your skull should you maintain this posture for an extended time. Once again, a small neck pillow or collar type pillow will allow proper posture dynamics and help keep the eyes straight forward.

Another consideration is proper lighting while you read. Lighting from behind or above your head should be bright enough to minimize squinting. Excessively bright or low lighting can irritate the eyes and lead to headaches.

Straining your muscles of your neck and spine prior to bed can disrupt sleep, cause headaches, neck pain, mid-back and low-back pain. A better solution is to avoid reading

in bed. A comfortable chair with good spinal support is always a better choice. Persistent pain or headaches should be checked by your local chiropractor.

Quote of the week: *“Strategic planning is worthless – unless there is first strategic vision.”* – John Naisbitt