

A blue silhouette of a person running, positioned to the left of the title. The background is a blurred image of a modern building with large windows and a walkway.

Tokyo Physio

We hope you all had a great festive season, researchers in Britain recently calculated that January 23 is the most miserable day of the year. The end of holidays, cold weather and short days contributed to the statistics. With that date out of the way it's all uphill to June 23 which the same researchers identified as the happiest day of the year. At Tokyo Physio we continue to look for ways to improve our service to the ex-patriate community and have recently hired Morioka-san – “Mokka” an Australian trained sports massage therapist working in the room next door and even at your work place! We continue to conduct ergonomic consultations through Optim Ergonomics and through Mokka we are now able to provide stress and tension relieving massage on site at offices as an addition to our seminars and individual workstation consultations. Feel free to call us anytime to find out how we can assist you or your company.

This newsletter we are focusing on local issues as we have an in-depth look at a common problem afflicting the Money Broker a familiar species of Tokyo financial market worker. Please be patient with us as we head into the jungle to take a look at this creature, its habits, habitats and most importantly how these contribute to its musculoskeletal problems.

The Tokyo based Money Broker (*Corpulentis Affluentus*) is a curious species generally found rummaging around cramped Roppongi bars and low rent office spaces in search of new opportunities for recreation and career advancement. Easily recognizable by its number 3 hair cut, pot belly, check shirt, bags under the eyes and the perennial greeting call of “Hello Mate” or “You out tonight?”; most Tokyo residents will have stumbled across one of these creatures from time to time. At Tokyo Physio we have seen several pass through our doors with various ailments. It became apparent to us that a considerable number of these poor creatures were suffering from one sided neck pain. After seeing this condition often nearly cripple these poor fellows, our interest was spiked and we decided to look into it further. We contacted the Australian Physiotherapy Research Foundation (APRF) to discuss performing a study on this condition that we had termed “Broker’s Neck”.

Tokyo Physio: “Yes Hello this is Tokyo Physio, we are interested into performing a study into Broker’s Neck, and would like to know if you would be interested in helping us out with funding or other assistance?”

APRF: “Broken Necks, that’s great! Indeed we would be interested, due to the recent publicity on stem cell research, and physiotherapy’s role there is a great deal of community interest in this area. What type of research did you have in mind?”

TP: “Oh no, my apologies, this line is not great, I didn’t say Broken Necks....I said Broker’s Neck....you see there is this group of highly paid financial market workers called Money Brokers - nice enough blokes and they are suffering from neck pain related to their work in droves. We are interested in researching the causes, pathology, prevention and treatment of this condition”.

APRF: Long Pause..... “I see.....and do you think this is more suitable than spinal cord injuries as a use of APRF time and funding?”

TP: “I think that’s the front door...and the kettle boiling, I’ll get back to you later, thank you for your time.”
Click.



That idea gone it was back to the drawing board. We'd have to do our own research on what seems to be causing these often quite severe neck problems. The first step was to see how and where this curious species spends its days and nights. Nocturnally the Money Broker can often be found in bars surrounded by similar creatures, including its perennial partner, confidant, adversary and meal ticket - the 'Trader'. The Broker can often be seen to put extra stress on its neck by arching it backwards as it laughs heartily at the trader's every comment. It is also often found bending the neck forward in to sip from pints and nodding heartily to agree with the Trader. Broker's also can put excess stress on the neck in Gentlemen's clubs as they continually crane and strain their neck for enhanced viewing angles.

Sometime after sunrise the Money Broker slowly arises from its burrow and somehow makes its way into its place of work. Here is where the problems seem to worsen. It nestles down into a 2,000yen chair and remains there for the next 8-10 hours. It regularly stoops its head and neck forward while speaking into a microphone for sustained periods. It intersperses this stooping by repeatedly turning to one side to look at a white board with some strange hieroglyphics and to scream obscenities at those around them. This sustained sitting, stooping, shouting and turning puts an excess of stress on the joints, muscles, ligaments and discs in the neck. More often than not the one-sided pain in the neck is on the same side that the broker turns to look at the board. When Broker's Neck is in it's advanced stage it can irritate the nerve and transmit pain, numbness and pins and needles down the arm. Generally speaking the further down the arm the pain travels, the worse the condition is.

Do I already have, or am I at risk of developing Broker's neck? Try this check list below:

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) I occasionally suffer from pain in my neck or upper arm. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) I sometimes have difficulty turning my neck while driving. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) I regularly turn to one side and lean forward into a microphone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) I have trouble getting my neck and head comfortable when sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) My office chair and desk used by date is prior to 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) I exercise less than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) I have had episodes of neck or shoulder pain in the past 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8) I used to sell fruit and vegetables from a cart | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9) After a week away from work my neck and head feel lighter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10) My partner often tells me my shoulders are hunched
and my head is stooped too far forward | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered yes to more than 6 of these questions you are at great risk of developing, or may already have Broker's Neck.

If you have Broker's Neck or want to prevent it, here's what you should do:

- ✓ **Adjust your microphone higher so you can talk into it from a more erect position**
- ✓ **Concentrate on keeping your shoulders back and down**
- ✓ **Pull your head back so that it sits over your body, not protruded forwards**
- ✓ **Occasionally turn your neck slowly and fully to the other direction from the board**
- ✓ **Exercise 2-3 times per week**
- ✓ **Turn your whole upper body and swivel your chair to look at the boards**
- ✓ **Stand up and move away from your chair at least every hour**

From all of us here at Tokyo Physio we thank you for your support in 2005 and wish you all a tremendous 2006.

Physiotherapy for the English speaking population of greater Tokyo

Open Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm

Saturday 8am to 5pm

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