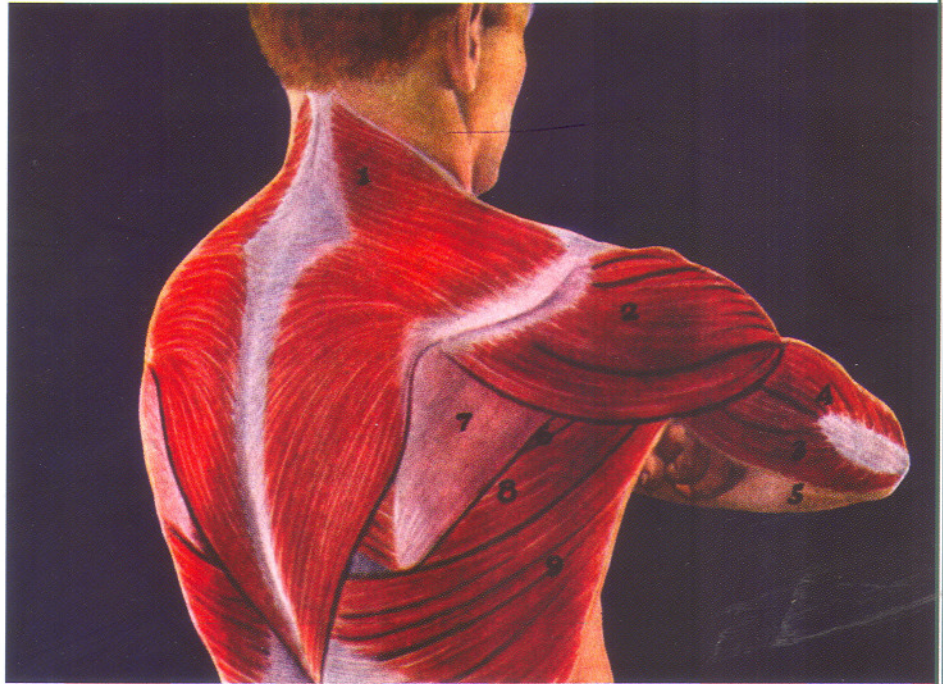


Stress & Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

by Paul Haider



People tend to overuse their muscles on a regular basis. The checker at the grocery store is constantly doing the same motion over and over again. This causes his muscles to become tense and ready to do the same action right away. The brain keeps firing signals to the muscles of his arms telling him he is going to have to do this movement again, so get ready. Because of this, his muscles never relax. They become overused and start to ache and sometimes become so foreshortened and balled up that they produce pressure on the nerves in some part of the body. This process produces carpal tunnel syndrome, a nagging backache or a painfully tense neck and shoulders that won't go away.

We are constantly getting feedback from our muscles telling us about our posture and the tension in our muscles. When we are working, we try not to key in on our bodies and we forget to listen to what our muscles are saying. Most of the time our body is saying, "Stop, do something different" but we ignore it and keep on doing what we are doing, thinking tension is normal. Well it's not! We need to listen to our body.

We rush around like monkeys climbing trees and never slow down all day long. We get into planes, trains and automobiles and keep on trucking up stairs and through hallways. We carry boxes, type away on keyboards without breaks never letting our muscles have a chance to recover and relax.

So when we go home and try to relax, we find it very hard to do. We've already overtaxed our muscular system, and it

doesn't know how to shut down. It's just like a rechargeable battery that sooner or later gives up not wanting to hold a charge. That's what happens with our brain and muscles, they get overtaxed and don't know how to shut off, and then they don't have the ability to recharge or relax. Your brain has been telling your body, keep those muscles moving. You try to sleep but all you do is toss and turn all night long because you're so tense. During the day you never once let your mind and body have a break. So we wake up tired as a dog, and drag ourselves through the next day. But you know what? Even a dog knows to listen to his body.

Powerful emotions cause our muscles to tense up. Think about it when you're ready to strike out in anger at someone, you hunch over, tensing up your arms, and clench your teeth. You're ready to fight, claw, and bite in order to save your life. When we feel

anxious, we also tense up, our muscles in our back want to shake like a leaf. When we can't stand something, we turn away and don't look and the tension mounts all over our body. And when we are sad the lines in our forehead are accentuated and we pull down the sides of our face.

But then we go to work and try to forget about what's going on with us inside and focus on our work. And again, we have our muscles turned on and tensed up like a steel girder.

We have learned as children to hold in our emotions allowing them to rule our bodies. You've probably noticed the way people who are always angry hold themselves, their posture is so erect and tight. And a person who is always sad slinks around holding his head low, after years you can see why their posture is a certain way. Or perhaps the person who never received nurturing from his mother leans forward looking for love. Automatically people around us react to our body language, moving away from us when we lean toward them, rejecting us and reinforcing our posture. Our bodies hold these postures because they are so used to having certain muscles in a state of tension.

So we have our minds working overtime, our muscles working according to our brains, and emotions causing us to become even more uptight and tense. We become numb and used to it. Then one day we take a class in deep relaxation and find out, "Boy I've never been that relaxed before." And then we start our way back from the brink of having major problems develop in our body from all that tension.

It's time to wake up before all that tension takes its toll on your body and some kind of disease process starts.

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