

PRESS RELEASE

Game on!

5 October 2015, Johannesburg: Getting overly involved in your videogames? Whilst this may lead to a neglected social life, there are more perilous physical consequences. Claire Gibson from La-Z-Boy, the company that pioneered the way with the first reclining chair of its kind, explains the problems that can be faced by gamers sitting for hours on end, and what changes you can make to prevent them.

The risks

Our modern lifestyles have led to many people sitting for the majority of their day. “Think about it - we sit in our cars or on public transport, we sit at our desks at work, we sit in meetings, we sit while we eat, we sit while we watch TV or play video games, and the list goes on,” points out Claire. The problem is that our bodies aren’t built to sit for such long periods of time, and the effects can be detrimental to our health.

Our spine is designed to move, and it’s that very movement that keeps it lubricated and healthy. Sitting for prolonged periods puts the body on standby mode, resulting in a slowed metabolism, decreased circulation, shortened muscles, strained joints, and constricted digestion and oxygen flow. Not only can this lead to health issues such as weight gain, and in more extreme cases, cardiovascular disease, but it also impairs concentration, which is essential to top performance game playing.

Whilst we may not be able to change how long we sit for, we can pay more attention to how we sit, particularly whilst gaming. “Gamers often start out with a good upright back, but progressively slump and slide down their chairs as time passes. Gamers also tend to lean in, protracting the neck, rounding the shoulders, squinting eyes and straining facial muscles,” points out Claire. She notes how this puts strain on the spine and joints in the neck, resulting in shoulder pain, headaches and even pinched nerves down the arm.

The solution

Good posture is key to a less pain-filled body. “When your bones, joints and muscles aren’t in neutral they stress and overwork to compensate for this,” says Claire. She firmly believes that choosing an adequately supportive chair is the first step in the right direction. “La-Z-Boy recliners have long been the pinnacle of seating for TV watchers and gamers alike. And it’s no wonder, as they are the comfiest and most supportive seats in the house,” nods Claire.

La-Z-Boy recliners are particularly great for gamers because they’re freestanding and can be easily moved to the optimal screen viewing distance, as opposed to a substantially sized sofa that remains in one position permanently. “Gamers should avoid craning their necks or contorting their bodies in weird angles to view the screen properly. Ideally they should be sitting in a comfortable chair that is directly in line with, and a good distance

from, the screen so they don't have to lean in and strain their neck and eyes," points out Claire. She suggests arranging your seating and equipment to promote a neutral and relaxed body posture.

Movement is also essential to wellbeing. La-Z-Boy's PowerRecliner's are the ultimate gamers chairs as they have the ability to slide back into a more comfortable position that supports the lumbar spine, particularly for gamers who are chair bound for prolonged periods. "Sitting in a reclined position relieves pressure whilst supporting your legs and back. In addition, La-Z-Boy recliners enable you to change your seating position according to your needs, with up to 18 different comfort positions. So you can go from slightly reclined to a full laying position, with the footrest raised to elevate your legs and feet for improved circulation." explains Claire.

She believes that a supremely comfortable and supportive seated or reclining position can go a long way to help you avoid discomfort and relieve competition-induced tension and fatigue. "Despite it's level of mental engagement, gaming tends to be an entirely sedentary activity. So if you're a serious gamer, then there's no doubt that a La-Z-Boy is the chair you should be sitting in!"

Sitting tips for gamers:

"Let's face it, sitting and gaming for prolonged periods of time can lead to numerous physical ailments, but there's no need for you to give up on gaming just yet," smiles Claire. Here are some tips on how to create a healthier gaming experience whilst racking in top scores:

- **Alignment:** Assume a neutral posture by shifting your pelvis forward, straightening your back, lifting your chest, rolling your shoulders down, and lengthening your neck.
- **Position:** Place your screen at the correct height and angle to avoid straining or twisting your neck for extended periods.
- **Stretch:** Stretch your neck, back, arms, hands and legs at least every 30 minutes to relieve tension and encourage circulation. Try doing this while watching others play or during pauses within a game.
- **Balance:** Keep both feet flat on the ground or raised on a cushioned footrest. Avoid crossing your legs, sitting on one leg, or sitting with one foot higher than the other.
- **Breaks:** Avoid marathon gaming sessions, and be sure to step away from your game, taking a little walk at regular intervals.
- **Cords:** Make sure your cords are long enough to reach your chair comfortably so you don't have to lean forward and strain your neck.
- **Relax:** Keep your face, shoulders, arms and hands relaxed. Support your arms on arm rests or let them fall relaxed at the sides of your body.
- **Glare:** Minimise eyestrain by avoiding glare. Reposition strong lights and use blinds or curtains to control light levels. Also try adjusting your television's brightness to a comfortable level.

- **Lifestyle:** Maintain a balance lifestyle with a healthy diet, ample hydration, and good regular sleep. Be sure to turn off your gaming devices half an hour you go to bed to help your brain to wind down.
- **Treatment:** Be sure to seek the help of a health care professional should you experience symptoms such as pain, throbbing, aching, tingling, numbness, burning sensation, or stiffness.

About La-Z-Boy in SA

The La-Z-Boy range is available throughout South Africa at specially appointed La-Z-Boy furniture retailers. Visit www.la-z-boy.co.za to find a retailer closest to you.

ENDS

Released on behalf of La-Z-Boy (www.la-z-boy.co.za) by The Line Communications (www.theline.co.za, ant@theline.co.za).