

# Media Release

## Working from home a real pain for Aussies

- **New research reveals two-thirds of those who work from home still do not have a dedicated, ergonomic home office space**
- **A quarter of Aussies are in more pain as a result of working from home, with a fifth only seeking help once they are unable to move**
- **This Osteopathic Healthcare Week (18 – 24 April), Osteopathy Australia is encouraging Australians to Set-up, Stand-up and Seek help to live a life without pain**

**EMBARGO: 18 APRIL 2022** – It has been more than two years since Australians were told to pack up their desks and work from home, yet two-thirds (65%) of those who work remotely still do not have a dedicated, ergonomic home office space – with one in five (22%) working either from their dining room table or from a laptop wherever they can find space.

Working from home and hybrid working models are clearly here to stay, with a third of Australians (34%) now either working remotely or a hybrid of at home and on-site. Office workers are twice as likely (68%) to work from home spending a staggering 90% of their day in front of a computer.

Despite the work life balance benefits of working from home, the ergonomic set-up of our home offices – or lack thereof – is now being linked to a rise in pain, with a quarter (25%) of Aussies reporting an increase in pain since they started working from home.

With a quarter (26%) of Australians now experiencing pain or discomfort in their body because of their day-to-day work and almost half (49%) of desk workers having a recurring niggle or pain, experts are urging them to take preventive action and seek treatment now.

President of Osteopathy Australia, Dr Michelle Funder, urged Aussies to consider whether their home workspace needed improvement and to seek help if they are struggling with pain.

“This research is very concerning to see, it’s shining a light on the bad habits Aussies have developed while working from home – they’re moving less by spending almost all of their day in front their computer and with the majority not having an adequate home office set-up,” Dr Funder said.

“Excessive sitting or a sedentary posture can aggravate an existing painful condition and can lead to the onset of new conditions such as neck or back pain, headaches and upper limb injury.

“In osteopathy, we consider the person as a whole, including their pain, general health and wellbeing, lifestyle, ergonomics and posture and then work with people to develop a personalised treatment plan to help them keep working and doing the things they love,” she said.

Worryingly, the research also indicates Aussies are waiting until their pain is unbearable before seeking professional help from their GP or allied health professionals, such as osteopaths – with one in five (17%) unable to move before they seek help.

When IT engineer Dave Payne started working from home, he soon noticed a pain developing in his neck.

"I had worked in IT for 16 years before the lockdown and although it's technically a desk job, I was still quite active during the day – I'd be up and moving during my train commute, in between meetings and when out working on client sites," Dave said.

"But this all stopped once I started working from home – I probably spent all day in front of the computer for two years, I stopped exercising and my posture was terrible due to poor office ergonomics.

"I started to feel this unbearable pain in my neck and when I sought treatment from an osteopath, I discovered I had an acute neck injury from a disk bulge which landed me in a neurosurgeon's office.

"I was worried that I'd need surgery, but thankfully I started to improve after appointments with an osteopath every two weeks and referral to weekly appointments with an exercise physiologist.

"I am so lucky that it was caught early, it could have been so much worse if I had waited to get help. Now, after changing my office ergonomics and receiving regular treatment, I am feeling so much better and have been able to avoid more invasive interventions," he said.

This Osteopathic Healthcare Week (18 – 24 April), Osteopathy Australia is encouraging Australians to Set-up, Stand-up and Seek help. For more information and to find an osteopath, Aussies can visit [www.whatisosteop.com](http://www.whatisosteop.com).

### **About Osteopathy Australia**

Osteopathy Australia is the national peak body representing the interests of osteopaths, osteopathy as a profession and consumer's right to access osteopathic services. Osteopathy Australia is a member of Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) and the Osteopathic International Alliance (OIA).

### **About the Research & Citations**

The research by Osteopathy Australia was carried out on a national representative sample of 1,008 Australians aged 18 and over in March 2022. Methodology: The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that is independently conducted and verified by PureProfile.