

## Wellness and inner ergonomics for the audiologist

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### Overview:

A day's work for an audiologist can be challenging in meeting the demands of a busy schedule. From newborns to the elderly, our interaction with the client requires us to bend, stoop, twist and turn to operate equipment, perform assessments, fit devices, etc. Additionally, we are dealing with time and economic pressures, along with the emotional stresses from our clients. In combination, these factors can result in occupational chronic pain and stress.

Audiologist Isla Beausire (*'Looking at musculoskeletal disorders in audiology'*, ENT and Audiology News, Sept/Oct 2018) identifies everyday ergonomic risk factors for the audiologist being a combination of: 1) high task repetition, 2) forceful exertion, and 3) repetitive sustained awkward positions. Her recommendations for risk reduction are focused on improved ergonomic standards for furniture and equipment.

But what about our 'Inner Ergonomics', i.e. the way our bodies are best designed to sit, stand, bend and move efficiently? Although the design of furniture and equipment - 'Outer Ergonomics' - is important, what is frequently overlooked are audiologists' 'Inner Ergonomics' – i.e. efficiency in posture and movement. Some anatomical joints are designed for prolonged bending, some are not. The risk of occupational chronic pain can be reduced with knowledge of biomechanical design principles.

This Learning Lab will be interactive and practical, working in small groups. You will learn how to improve your 'Inner Ergonomics'. This workshop, based on principles of the Alexander Technique, follows a model which has been successfully taught in dental clinics throughout Australia and New Zealand to reduce the risk of occupational chronic pain.

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the cause of occupational chronic pain
- Recognize harmful habitual work postures for the audiologist
- Apply knowledge of biomechanical design to everyday audiological tasks