

Neck: Exercises

Introduction

Here are some examples of exercises for you to try. The exercises may be suggested for a condition or for rehabilitation. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercises if you start to have pain.

You will be told when to start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

How to do the exercises

Neck stretch to the side (upper trap stretch)



1. Sit in a firm chair, or stand up straight. Keep your shoulder down as you lean away from it. To help you remember to do this, start by relaxing your shoulders and lightly holding on to your thighs or your chair.
2. Look straight ahead. Tilt your head toward one shoulder and hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Relax and let the weight of your head stretch your muscles.
3. Slowly return your head to the starting position.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times toward each shoulder.

If you would like a little added stretch, place your arm behind your back. Use the arm opposite of the direction you are tilting your head. For example, if you are tilting your head to the left, place your right arm behind your back.

You can also add more stretch by using one hand to pull your head toward your shoulder. For example, keeping your right shoulder down, lean your head to the left and use your left hand to gently and steadily pull your head toward your shoulder.

Neck stretch to the diagonal



1. Sit in a firm chair, or stand up straight. Look straight ahead. If you're standing, keep your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Turn your head slightly toward the direction you will be stretching. Tip your head diagonally, bringing your chin toward your chest. Relax and let the weight of your head stretch your muscles. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds.
3. If you would like a little added stretch, use your hand to gently and steadily pull your head forward on the diagonal. For example, to stretch toward the left, use your left hand.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.
5. It's a good idea to repeat these steps toward the other side.

Dorsal glide stretch



1. Sit up straight in a firm chair, or stand up straight. If you're standing, keep your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Keep your neck straight, and look straight ahead.
3. Slowly tuck your chin as you glide your head backward over your body.
4. Hold for a count of 6, and then relax for up to 10 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Chest and shoulder stretch



1. Sit or stand tall. You can also stand against a wall. Glide your head backward over your body (dorsal glide).
2. Raise both arms with your palms facing forward and your elbows out to the sides.
3. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your arms while squeezing your shoulder blades down and back. Keep your elbows back and your hands up throughout the exercise. If you're using a wall, keep your arms and hands against the wall. You will feel your shoulder blades slide down and together. At the same time, you will feel a stretch across your chest and the front of your shoulders.
4. Hold for about 6 seconds. Then relax for up to 10 seconds.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Neck side flexion (isometric)



1. Sit in a chair, or stand up straight. If you're standing, keep your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Keep your neck straight, and look straight ahead.
3. Put your right hand against the right side of your head above your ear.
4. As you press against the side of your head with your hand, also press your head back against your hand. You should feel the muscles at the side of your neck tighten, but your head should not move to either side. Press firmly, but not as hard as you can.
5. Hold for about 6 seconds.

6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
7. Repeat these steps using your left hand against the left side of your head.

Neck extension (isometric)



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1. Sit in a chair, or stand up straight. If you're standing, keep your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Keep your neck straight, and look straight ahead.
3. Lace your fingers together or put one hand over the other, and place your hands at the back of your head.
4. Press your hands against your head at the same time you press your head straight back against your hands. Press firmly, but not as hard as you can. Do not tip your head back.
5. Hold for about 6 seconds.
6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Neck flexion (isometric)



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1. Sit in a chair, or stand up straight. If you're standing, keep your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Keep your neck straight, and look straight ahead.
3. Put the heels of your hands against your forehead just above your eyebrows.
4. Press your hands against your forehead at the same time you press your head against your hands. Press firmly, but not as hard as you can. Do not tip your head forward.
5. Hold for about 6 seconds.
6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call

your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

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