

HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
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OUR BEST EXERCISES FOR NECK PAIN

Neck pain is one of the most common conditions that patients seek physiotherapy for. This is not surprising given the constant amount of prolonged head down positions and modern technology use.

The reality is that most of us sit too much, either driving in a car or at our desks. Sitting all day increases our risk for obesity and puts us at risk for back pain and neck pain.

If you have neck pain, you want to get rid of it as soon as you can. One of the ways to do that is through exercise.

When neck pain is related to poor posture, more than just the neck needs to be addressed. Muscles in the chest, upper back, and shoulders can all potentially contribute to a hunched-forward position that may lead to neck pain.

Physiotherapy has emerged as a safe, effective way to relieve neck pain and discomfort. A skilled therapist can recommend exercises that will strengthen your muscles and increase mobility.

Don't exercise if you have severe neck pain, pins and needles or weakness in your hands or arms. If you get it while you exercise, stop right away and call your health professional.



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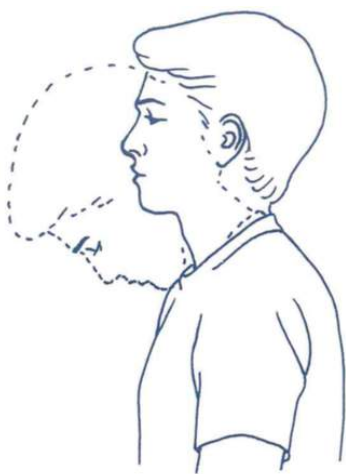
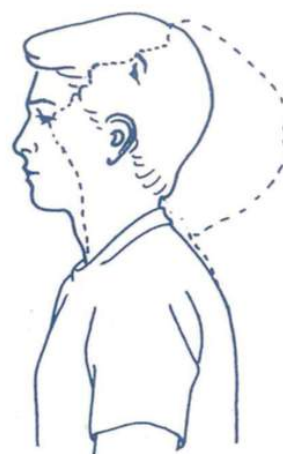
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You should also seek advice from your Physiotherapist prior to starting any exercises as different conditions can respond to different exercise programs

SO WHICH EXERCISES SHOULD I DO? THESE WILL HELP YOUR RANGE OF MOTION

NECK FLEXION

Neck Flexion: From the sitting position, tilt your head down so your chin touches your chest. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat. Do this five times.



NECK EXTENSION

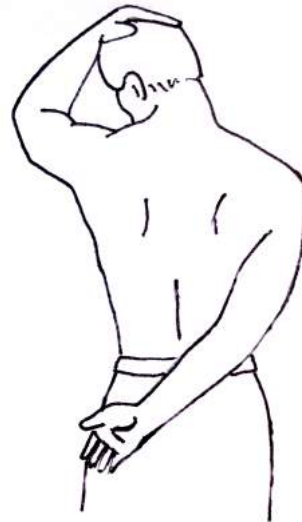
Neck extension in sitting. Begin sitting tall, with your back and neck straight, shoulders back slightly. Gently take your neck backwards, looking up towards the ceiling until you feel a mild to moderate stretch pain-free Repeat 5 times.

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ROTATIONS

Rotations: Stand or sit with your back and your head squarely over your shoulders. Then, turn your head as far you can comfortably to one side. Hold it for up to 10 seconds. Then turn your head to the other side, and hold it for up to 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times



LEVATOR SCAPULAE STRETCH.

TIGHT AND TENSE MUSCLES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A FORWARD HEAD POSTURE AND TIGHT ANTERIOR CHEST

Levator scapulae stretch. This stretch works on the levator scapulae, which is a long muscle that runs down the side of the neck and attaches into the shoulder. The levator scapulae is one of the more common neck muscles to become injured, tight, and/or tender.

Place your opposite hand angled behind your back, turn head 45 degrees and gently stretch your head towards your arm pit. Hold 15 seconds and repeat 3 times

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CHEST PECTORAL STRETCH

Chest stretch. Various stretches can help open up a tight chest, which is important for bringing the shoulders further back and allowing for good posture. A common one is the corner stretch as above. If a corner is not available, another option is the door frame pectoral stretch.

Find a doorway or a hallway where you can rest your forearm on the wall and turn a quarter turn away. You should feel the front of your chest, your pectoralis muscles, stretching. Experiment with different angles for a full stretch and stop if you feel shoulder pain. Hold 15 seconds and repeat 3 times

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

We also know that strengthening is important for easing neck pain so we will include here a selection of strengthening exercises rather than just stretches above. You can work your neck muscles like any other muscles. We advise that these are best commenced with the guidance of your physiotherapist to ensure they are correctly done.

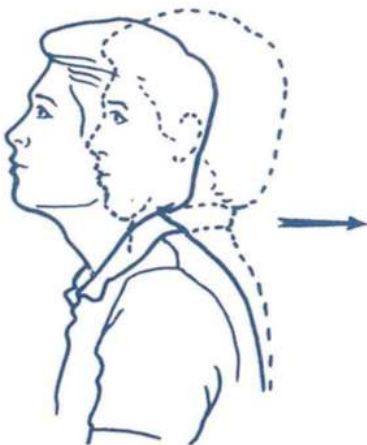
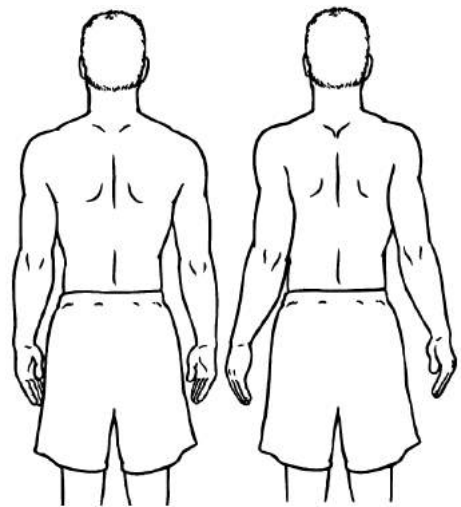
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CHIN TUCKS

Chin Tuck is one of the most effective postural exercises for combating neck pain. This exercise helps strengthen the muscles that pull the head back into alignment over the shoulders (upper thoracic extensors) and also stretches the scalene and suboccipital muscles and helps correct a forward head position.

Tuck your chin in slightly and gently slide your head towards the back of your spine so that it is on top of your cervical spine. It'll feel like you're pushing the back of your head into an imaginary headrest. Otherwise known as making a "double chin". Hold for a few seconds and repeat 5 times.



SCAPULAR RETRACTION:

After stretching your neck and shoulders, try rolling your shoulders forwards and backwards to loosen them up. Then bring the bottoms of your shoulder blades down your back and slightly towards midline. The tops of your shoulder stay relaxed.

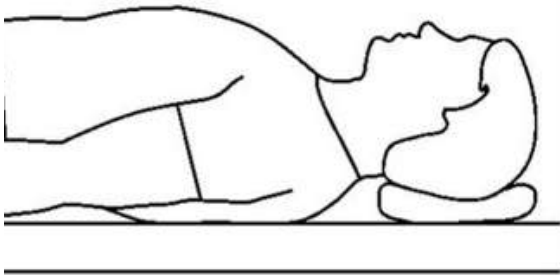
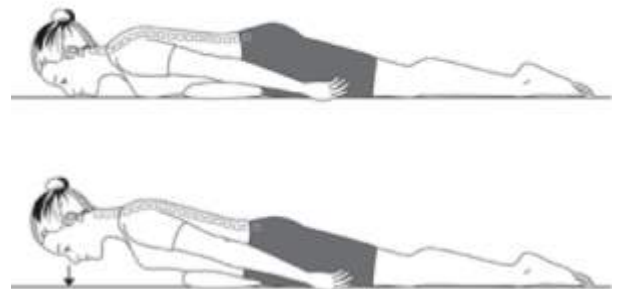
Slowly squeeze your shoulder blades together as hard and far as possible provided it does not cause or increase pain. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 5 times.

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DEEP NECK FLEXORS

Lie on your back with knees comfortably bent. Find your neutral spine position. Use a small rolled towel under the head if needed. Begin by tucking the chin then perform a small nodding movement, as if to look towards your toes. Don't lift your head up. You should not feel the muscles on the front of the neck moving, but rather you should be using the muscles deep behind them. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



PRONE COBRA

The prone cobra is a more advanced exercise that strengthens the muscles of the shoulder girdle as well as the neck and upper back. This exercise is done lying on the floor face down and uses gravity as resistance in the strengthening process.

Lying face down, place the forehead on a rolled up hand towel for comfort. Place the arms at the side, palms down on the floor.

Pinch the shoulder blades together and lift the hands off the floor.

Roll the elbows in, palms out and thumbs up.

Gently lift the forehead about an inch off the towel keeping the eyes looking straight at the floor (do not tip the head back and look forward).

Hold the position for 10 seconds repeat 5 times.



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MORE ADVANCED STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

You will need a loop of theraband

Sit up straight in a chair and put the back of your head in the loop of the resistance band, the ends of which should be securely tied to a nearby stationary object that is level with your head.

Make sure your neck and back stay straight as you slightly lean forward from your hips then apply gentle sustained pressure back into the theraband. Slowly return to the starting position, keeping shoulders back as you keep your neck straight. Repeat 5 times.

If you feel any pain from these exercises, stop immediately. If you are unsure how to do these exercises, talk to one of our physiotherapists.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO ?

Core exercises can help with your neck pain.

Your core is your abdomen, back, and buttocks. If your core is strong and you're holding your head upright as much as possible, your neck won't have to work as hard.

Stay flexible. Optimal spinal health means having flexibility in all directions. If your thoracic spine has limited rotation movement, more load and stress can be transferred to your lower back, neck or other body parts.

Vary positions at work. Sitting at computers and desks all day puts increased pressured on your spine. After 30 minutes of sitting, make sure you get up and walk around to keep the flow of blood and fluids to the spine. You can also set up a standing workstation to vary your position while working at the computer. You should also make sure your work desk and computer are set up properly for sitting or standing, to encourage optimal posture.

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PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR NECK AND BACK PAIN



If you suffer with neck pain of more than a weeks duration see a physiotherapist or health professional to help. Your physiotherapist will start by providing you with a thorough examination of your spine and thoracic mobility. Using manual therapy and other treatment techniques, your physiotherapist will help you to regain lost mobility, provide you with instructions on how to achieve ideal postural alignment, and prescribe therapeutic exercises that will support your spine. Your physiotherapist will assess the causes for your back and neck pain, mobilize your spinal joints, and will give you advice on how to best maintain your thoracic mobility, essential for a healthy low back and neck.

They can teach you exercises that stretch and strengthen the muscles while increasing your range of motion.

They also prescribe suitable and safe exercises and provide tips on how you can correct your position when sitting at a computer. Your physiotherapist can also refer you back to your family physician in cases where they suspect an underlying medical condition may be causing your back and neck pain that requires further investigation or medication.

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IN SUMMARY

- Neck pain is common but usually not a serious problem.
- Stay active.
- Gradually increase your normal activities and do regular exercise.
- If the pain is severe or not improving after a week or so, contact your health care professional.
- Pay attention to your sleeping position and sustained postures

If you need help with your neck pain, get in touch with any of our physiotherapists at 83462000 or 83422233

OTHER RESOURCES



We are passionate about providing our patients and community with information on prevention and management

We have put together a comprehensive free e-Book guide to understanding and managing neck pain. We explain the causes and contributing factors, useful advice and tips on self management, setting up a work station, important exercises and even advice on positions and postures to avoid.

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This PDF is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment and should not be interpreted as such. Always seek advice from a qualified medical professional and use of this information is at your own risk

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