



6

With hands clasped in front of you, lift both arms straight forward over your head. Separate your arms sideways and take them back down to the starting position. Repeat 5 times, 4 times daily.



7

Turn your upper body round as far as comfortable, and repeat to the other side. Repeat 5 times each side, 4 times daily.

What is whiplash injury?

A whiplash injury is caused by a sudden and unrestrained movement of the head. It may be a forward, backward or sideways movement. The most common cause is a road traffic accident but a blow to the head or fall may produce similar symptoms.

It is not unusual for symptoms of pain and stiffness to be delayed for 24 or 48 hours. Severe whiplash may take many months to fully resolve, however most mild cases settle down within a few weeks. Current evidence shows that early movement of the affected joints and maintenance of normal activities will help to prevent any delay in recovery from this type of injury.

Follow the advice and exercises described in this leaflet, they should help you to effectively manage the early stage of your whiplash injury. If you see no improvement in your neck symptoms, you may require an assessment and treatment by a chartered physiotherapist at **PhysioQinetics**.

What if my condition hasn't improved after these exercises?

If you see no improvement in your neck after these exercises, then it is likely you may need specialist musculoskeletal treatment. At PhysioQinetics, we pride ourselves in providing affordable first-class musculoskeletal physiotherapy. Why not make an appointment with us today?

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Patient information leaflet series

Neck Pain: Advice and exercise

This leaflet may have been handed to you by your doctor as you are experiencing neck pain of a mechanical nature. The aim of this leaflet is to give you some basic self-help advice and exercises to help manage your neck problem. Neck pain can occur at any age but is more common as you get older. You may wake with it or it may come on as a result of trauma such as a whiplash sustained in a road traffic accident or it may have come on for no apparent reason.

You are likely to be experiencing some or all of the following symptoms:-

- Pain in the neck which may radiate into the shoulders, arms and hands
- Tingling/Numbness
- Stiffness/reduced range of neck movement
- Headaches

Advice

- First, follow your doctor's recommendation on pain relief medication. It is important to have adequate pain relief to allow your neck to move freely and prevent muscle spasm.
- Heating the muscles around the neck and shoulders can help the muscles to relax and so ease your pain. Use a heated wheat pack or a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel. Place the heat around your

Exercises for neck pain

-continue-

neck and shoulder for 10-15 mins and use this every 2-3 hours if necessary.

- In whiplash injury, an ice pack may be more beneficial than a hot pack in the first 48 hours - try a pack of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel for 10 minutes. Do not use ice or heat if you have poor sensation or an infected wound in the area.
- You can help reduce your neck pain by maintaining good posture at all times. Sitting correctly reduces the strain on muscles and ligaments around your neck. Sit on an upright supportive chair, rather than a soft sofa. Sit well back in the chair and place a rolled up towel in the small of your back.
- Make sure your shoulders are in line with your hips and that your chin is not poking forward. If you use a computer, ensure that the screen is at eye level so you are not looking down.
- When sleeping, try to make sure your head and neck are straight and in line with the rest of your spine. If you lie on your side, this may require 1 or 2 pillows depending on their thickness.
- When driving it is easy to be tense and sit with shoulders hunched and chin poking forwards. Try to relax and position your seat quite upright so you can from time to time practice tucking in your chin to place the back of your head against the headrest for neck support.

It is important to exercise your neck in order to keep the joints mobile and the muscles flexible. This is done by following the below exercises. It is normal to experience some discomfort whilst doing the exercises especially when there is muscle spasm/joint stiffness.

Exercises

1



Pull your chin in keeping your neck and back in a straight position. Remain looking straight ahead throughout the exercise and do not tip your head backwards or forwards. Hold this position for 5 seconds - then relax, repeat 5 times, 4 times daily.



3

Bend your head forwards gently, bringing your chin towards your chest and then lift your head up to return to the centre. Repeat 5 times, 4 times daily.



4

Tilt your head towards one shoulder whilst keeping your head facing forward, without shrugging your other shoulder up, until you feel a stretch. Hold for 30 seconds, and repeat a total of 6 stretches per day for the left and right side.



5

Turn your head to look over to one side and repeat to other side. Repeat 5 times, 4 times daily.

Number of repetitions and sets of each exercise are only a rough guide, you may need to adjust this depending on the severity and irritability of your neck condition.

2



Lift the tip of your shoulder about an inch and slide your shoulder blades down and back. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 5 times, 4 times daily.

“If you experience dizziness or nausea while performing the exercises, if your pain becomes increasingly worse and remains worse, or if you have pins and needles or pain going down the arms which does not ease, **stop your exercises** and seek advice from your doctor.”