



Neck pain

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Neck pain

Pain in and around the neck area is a common problem in many people. The neck is the support of your head, and when your neck is injured, it really can feel like you have the “weight of the world on your shoulders.” Neck pain can be caused by many reasons, however 50% of neck pain is caused by the condition that mentioned.

Causes of common neck pain

1. Poor posture and overuse often lead to muscle strain, such as
 - Inappropriate chair and table
 - Cradling a telephone between your ear and shoulder
 - Working/playing on a continually for the long periods
 - Laying on your stomach and prolong keeping your neck upThe above causes of neck pain can be found in any ages which lead to stiff neck or shoulder muscles.
2. Degenerative conditions such as degenerative disk or joint disease and arthritis
3. Stress: Stress can cause chronic neck muscle spasm which result in neck pain and headache.
4. Neck injuries such as whiplash
5. Other causes: Disc or nerve injury such as a herniated disc or spinal stenosis, congenital spinal disease and abnormal eye sight, etc.

Symptoms

- Pain and stiffness around the neck area
- Sharp, shooting pain may radiate to the shoulder or down an arm
- Numbness and/or weakness in arms or hands
- Decreased mobility of the neck

Self-treatment of Acute Neck Pain

- Lie down periodically throughout the day to give your neck muscles a chance to rest from supporting your head. Soft collar may be recommended.
- Place hot or cold packs around the neck for 15-20 minutes. Be sure to wrap them in a towel before placing it onto the skin.
- Over the counter pain medications, such as aspirin, paracetamol, ibuprofen, etc. If the pain is not relieved within 3-5 days, you should consult your health care provider.
- Light stretches, occasionally throughout the day. Hold the stretches for 20-30 seconds, and gentle pulling should be felt. See the example of the stretches in the exercise section below.

When to see the doctor

- If you do not see a significant improvement in pain after 3-5 days of self-treatment
- Pain that radiates down your arm
- Numbness or weakness in arms or hands
- Bowel and bladder disturbances

Treatment

Medications

- Prescription medications are sometimes recommended by your physician if over the counter medication fails to significantly reduce your pain. Common medications include muscle relaxants, analgesics, or antiinflammatory
- Injections are sometimes recommended to help reduce inflammation at the nerve roots of the cervical spine.

Physical Therapy

- Neck Exercises aimed at improving flexibility and strength in the neck can help reduce neck pain and also reduce the risk of pain returning
- Traction is a technique that can help release pressure on nerve roots if nerve irritation is the source of the neck pain.
- Joint Mobilization/Manipulation in conjunction with exercise may be helpful to decrease pain and increase mobility.
- Ergonomic Training and Posture Correction can help to prevent the condition from exacerbating or reoccurring

Surgical treatment for neck pain is not very common; however surgery may be indicated for cases of nerve root or spinal cord compression where conservative treatment fails.

How to prevent neck pain

- Take the breaks throughout the day and be conscious of your posture:

1. Sitting

- Sit all the way back into your chair
- Knees should be lower than hips
- Keep your back straight and shoulders rolled back and down: a back support or towel roll may be placed at the curve of your low back.
- Keep your arms close to your body and use arm rests
- A computer monitor should be at the eye level



2. Sleeping

- Avoid sleeping on your stomach
- Lie on your side with a pillow between your knees or lie on your back with a pillow under both knees. In either position, placing a neck roll inside your pillow can help to support your neck so that your neck is in line with the rest of your spine. Avoid the very soft pillow.



Stretches for flexibility:

1. Place your left hand above your right ear and gently pull the head to the left side until you feel a slight pull on the right. Slightly depress your right shoulder for extra stretch. Hold 10 seconds and repeat 5-10 times. Repeat with the other side.



2. Use your left hand to pull your right hand downward toward the floor behind the back together with leaning your head to the left until you feel a slight stretch. Hold it for 10 seconds and repeat 5-10 times. Repeat with the other side.

2



3. Use your right arm to pull your left elbow across the body together with turning your head to the left. Hold the position for 10 seconds and repeat 5-10 times. Repeat with the other side.

3

***Tip:** Prior to the stretching, the muscle can be stretched easier with 20 minutes of hot pack on your neck; heat will relax the tense muscles.

Exercise for strength

Isometric exercise: With these exercises, you can control the amount of resistance and your head should not move during the exercise. Sit straight and keep your neck in a neutral position throughout. Hold each posture for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times, 2-3 sets a day.



1. Press index and middle fingers against forehead, resisting the looking down motion.

1



2. Press index and middle fingers against the back of your head, resisting the looking up motion.

2



3. Press right index and middle fingers on the right side of your head while resisting side bending. Repeat on the left side.

3

Remark: If you already have neck pain, please consult your physician or physical therapist before beginning any exercise routine.



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INS-DC-BMJ-00072-E-I-S-1110-Rev 02