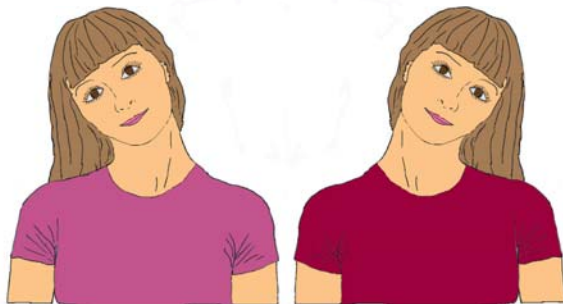


EXERCISES FOR NECK PAIN

STARTING POSITION

All the following exercises should be performed from a seated position, if possible in front of a mirror to check you maintain the correct posture during the exercises. Make sure you are sitting on the whole of the seat, with your spine against the chair back. Your shoulders should be relaxed and not hunched, the soles of your feet should rest evenly on the floor, and your legs should be the same distance apart as the width of your hips. Rest your hands, palms down, on your knees, and look straight ahead.

During the exercises keep your breathing calm and regular – you might want to use your breathing as a rhythm for holding and changing positions.



Exercise Nr. 1)

In the starting position, breathe in and tip your head as far as you can towards your right shoulder (without raising your shoulder to meet your head). Count to 10, then exhale whilst bringing your head back slowly to the starting position.

Breathe normally for one breath, and then complete the exercise moving your head towards your left shoulder. Hold the position for a count of 10 and then slowly move your head back to the starting position.

Repeat the sequence 3 times

Exercise Nr. 2)

Repeat exercise 1) resting your hand on your head, as shown in the diagram.

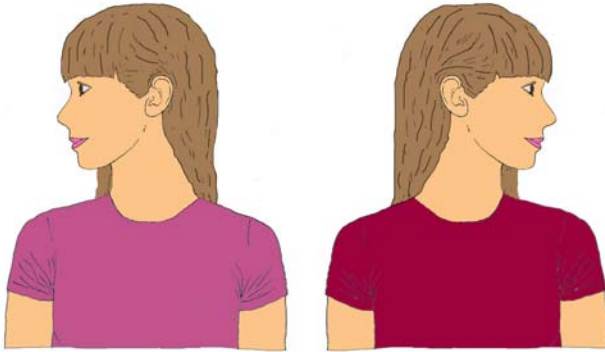
The weight of your arm will help stretch out your neck muscles.

Change arm as you alternate from right to left, and remember to breathe evenly throughout the exercise.

Repeat the sequence 3 times



Exercise Nr. 3)



In the starting position, breathe in and turn your head as far as possible to the right. Count to 10 and bring your head slowly back to the starting position. Now repeat the exercise turning your head to the right. Hold the position for a count of 10, and then slowly bring your head back to the starting position. Move your eyes as you move your head, so that you are always looking in the direction you are facing.

Repeat the sequence 3 times.

Exercise Nr. 4)

Position your hands as in the diagram, with one hand on the side of your chin, and the other on the back of your head, on the opposite side. Repeat exercise 3), pushing gently with your hands. The additional pressure of your hands should enable you to turn your head further, stretching out your neck muscles.

Repeat the sequence 3 times



A



B



Exercise Nr. 5)

From the starting position, breathe in, and tip your head back and look up to the ceiling, as shown in figure **A**. Keep your mouth closed during the exercise to help lengthen the muscles on the front of your neck.

Count to 10, and bring your head slowly back to the starting position.

Breathe in, and tip your head forward, bringing your chin towards your chest and looking down, as shown in figure **B**. Hold the position for a count of 10 and then slowly bring your head back up to the starting position.

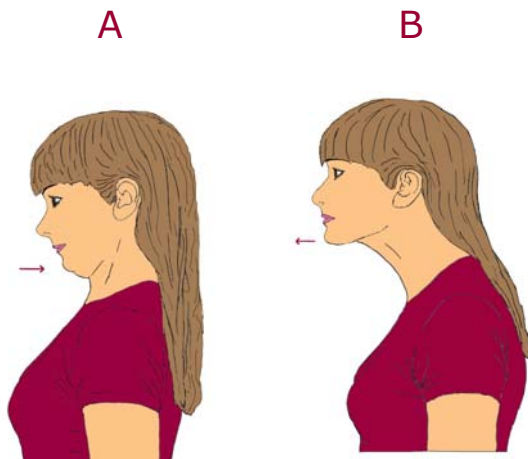
Repeat the sequence 3 times

Exercise Nr. 6)

Cross your hands behind your head, at the nape of your neck, keeping your spine straight and against the chair back. Tip your head forward, with your chin towards your chest, and let your elbows drop down. This will help stretch the muscles at the back of your neck and shoulders.

Hold this position for a count of 10, then raise your elbows and slowly bring your head back to the starting position.

Repeat the exercise 3 times.



Exercise Nr. 7)

From the starting position, pull your chin back towards the nape of your neck, as shown in figure **A**, whilst looking straight ahead. Hold this position for about 10 seconds, and then bring your chin back to the starting position.

Next, push your chin forwards as shown in figure **B**, hold the position for the count of 10 and then return to the starting position.

Repeat the sequence 3 times.

Exercise Nr. 8)

This exercise strengthens your neck muscles and should be performed after the previous stretching exercises.

With your hands crossed behind your head, push your head back whilst pushing forwards with your hands.

Hold this position for about 10 seconds, then relax and take a normal breath.

Repeat the exercise 3 times.





Exercise Nr. 9)

This exercise strengthens your neck muscles. With one hand on top of the other, press back against your forehead, whilst pushing your head forward against your hands. Hold this position for about 10 seconds, then relax and take a full breath.

Repeat 3 times.

Exercise Nr. 10)

From the starting position, outline the numbers 1 to 9 in the air with the tip of your nose. Finish by making the shape of the 0 in both directions. Move your head slowly, and make the numbers as large as possible.

... 4 3 2 1



GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

These exercises are designed to alleviate muscular tension, as over time, this can cause pain and limit your movement.

Perform each exercise slowly and hold the positions for the full amount of time. Do not force the movements. Stretch your muscles as far as is comfortable, without going beyond this limit as you may risk further muscle damage or inflammation.

Before you start exercising, gently massage your neck muscles, and if possible, apply heat to the area to help relax the muscles and encourage the blood-flow.

WARNING

Whilst doing these exercises it is normal to feel the muscles stretching, particularly if you are not used to these kinds of movements, or if you have a particularly stressful lifestyle and consequently suffer from tense shoulder and neck muscles. As some people may feel a slight dizziness when they first start doing these exercises, we recommend that you stay seated, with your eyes open throughout.

However IT IS NOT NORMAL to feel pain during the exercises. If you should feel pain, stop exercising and try again the following day. If the pain persists, consult your doctor.

**University Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology
Galeazzi Orthopaedic Institute**

- Prof. Valerio Sansone -

Before starting any physical exercise, you should consult your GP or specialist to check that the exercise is suitable for you.