

A woman in profile, facing left, is shown stretching her neck. Her right hand is placed on top of her head, and her left hand is behind her back. She is wearing a watch on her right wrist. The background is a solid blue color.

THE

NECK

**STRETCH &
EXERCISE**

PATIENT HANDBOOK

THE NECK STRETCH & EXERCISE PATIENT HANDBOOK

The exercises in this booklet are to be performed with appropriate instruction and monitoring from a qualified health professional. This guidebook is meant to help in performing home exercises but is not meant to replace the necessary instruction needed to ensure these exercises are being performed properly. Some of these exercises may not be appropriate for you depending on your specific neck condition. If pain or discomfort should arise from performing any of these exercises, discontinue and consult a health care professional.

The home exercise program that has been recommended for you is a very important part of your care. Proper application of home exercises can make a considerable difference to the restoration and maintenance of a healthy neck. Make sure you find the time to perform the exercises that have been provided for you.

Perform the Neck stretches that have been marked with a check.

Range of Motion

- Flexion-Extension
- Rotation
- Lateral Flexion

Anterior Stretches

- Anterior Neck stretch
- Shoulder Rolls
- Arm Pull Back
- Door Jam Pull Back

Posterior Stretches

- Upper Back Stretch

Stretching should be performed with slow and smooth motions

Stretching should not be painful

It is recommended that you warm your muscles up with light exercises before beginning your stretches.



FLEXION/EXTENSION

X/day _____ Reps _____

Gently bend your head forward as far as possible and hold this position for 5 seconds. Gently bend your head backwards as far as possible. Hold for 5 seconds then relax.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.

ROTATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Gently turn your head to the right as far as possible and hold for 5 sec. Gently turn your head to the left as far as possible. Hold for 5s then relax.



LATERAL FLEXION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Gently bend your head to the right as far as possible and hold for 5 sec. Gently bend your head to the left as far as possible. Hold for 5s then relax.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



ANTERIOR NECK STRETCH

X/day ____ Reps ____

Place your right hand on your left shoulder. Keep your eyes level as you bring your chin back into your chest and your ears back over your shoulders. Lean your neck to the right as you turn your head to the same side. Hold for 15 sec. then relax. Repeat with the opposite side.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



SHOULDER ROLLS

X/day _____ Reps _____

Start with arms hanging gently at your sides. Roll your shoulders forward, then up toward your ears, and then back as you pull your shoulder blades together. Relax back to the starting position and then repeat.



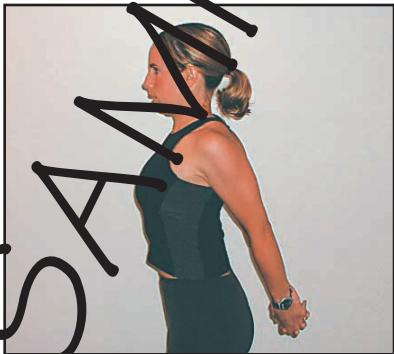
Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



ARM PULL BACK

X/day _____ Reps _____

Put your hands together behind your back. Pull the shoulders back and down towards the floor. You should feel the stretch in the upper part of the chest. Hold for 15 sec. then relax.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



DOOR JAM PULL BACK

X/day _____ Reps _____

Standing in a doorway place your forearms along the side of the door frame. Stick your chest out through the doorway until you feel a light stretch throughout your chest. Hold for 15 sec. then relax.



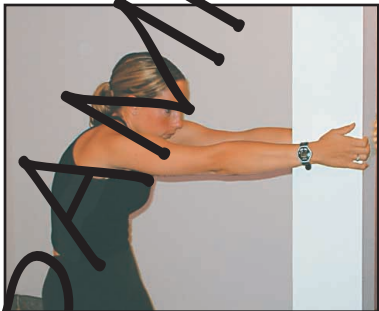
Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



UPPER BACK STRETCH

X/day ____ Reps ____

Stretch out your arms in front of you and grab onto something that is stable. Lean back gently until you feel a light stretch in your upper back between your shoulder blades. Hold for 15 sec. then relax.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.

Perform the strengthening exercises that have been marked with a check.

Posterior Strengthening

- Posterior Translation
- Posterior Rotation

Anterior Strengthening

- Forward Translation
- Forward Rotation

Lateral Strengthening

- Lateral Translation
- Lateral Rotation

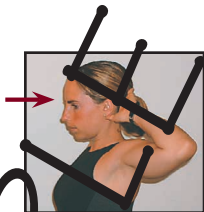
- Rotation Strengthening

The following neck strengthening exercises use your own arm strength as resistance. Light to moderate resistance is all that is recommended. You should not be trying to push as hard as you can. Discuss with your practitioner what amount of resistance is best for you.

POSTERIOR TRANSLATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Place your hands on the back of your head. Keeping your eyes level bring your head straight back into your hands. Hold for 5 sec then relax.



POSTERIOR ROTATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Place your hands on the back of your head. Use your hands to resist as you try to look up towards the ceiling. Hold for 5 sec. then relax.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.

FORWARD TRANSLATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Place your hands on your forehead. Keeping your eyes level use your hands to resist as you press your head forward. Hold for 5 sec. then relax.



FORWARD ROTATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Place your hands on your forehead. Use your hands to resist as you try and turn your chin to your chest. Hold for 5 sec. then relax.



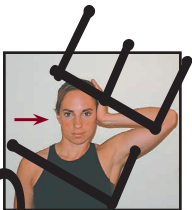
Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.



LATERAL TRANSLATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

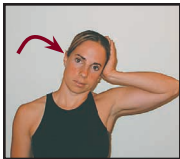
Place your hand on the left side of your head. Push straight sideways into your hand. Hold for 5 sec. then relax. Repeat on the right side.



LATERAL ROTATION

X/day ____ Reps ____

Put your hand on the left side of your head. Try to push your head so your ear touches your shoulder. Hold for 5 sec. then relax. Repeat on right side.

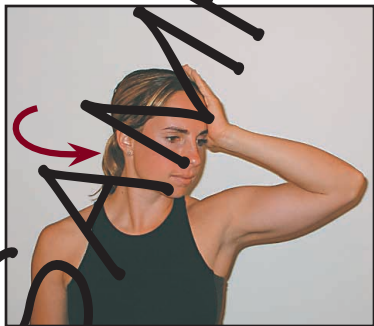


Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.

ROTATION

X/day _____ Reps _____

Place your left hand on the left side of your face. Use your hand to resist as you try to turn your head to the left to look over your shoulder. Hold for 5 sec. then relax. Repeat with the opposite side.



Caution: If these exercises cause discomfort, discontinue and consult a health professional.

POSTURE TIPS

The ears should be directly above your shoulders. The head weighs approximately 8 pounds. When positioned directly over the shoulders this weight is balanced and causes minimal stress on the spine. If your head is forward it can put excessive stress on the joints in the lower neck which over long periods of time can lead to degenerative changes. The lower neck is where the nerves that feed the arms exit the spine. Degenerative changes in this region can therefore cause serious arm problems.

The shoulders should be back. Slouching draws the head forward and leads to increased stress on the lower neck.

The hips should be over top of the ankles. Some people sway the abdomen forward. This leads to an increased curve in the low back which can increase the stress on certain low back joints. The low back is naturally the area of highest stress in the spine and most prone to problems. Poor posture increases the stress on this already vulnerable area. The low back is also the region where the nerves that feed the legs exit the spine. Low back degeneration can therefore lead to serious leg problems.

Keeping good posture can make a considerable difference to the long term health of your spine. Once degenerative changes have taken place it is very difficult and often impossible to restore the spine back to full health. Always make an effort to maintain good posture.

PROPER POSTURE

