

Making your neck muscles work without actually moving your head will help reduce pain and fatigue. Place your hand on the side of your head and apply increasing pressure. Maintain the force for 10 seconds then gradually release. Repeat on the other side.

Put your hand on your forehead and push forwards against your hand, then put your hand behind your head and push backwards against your hand. Maintain the force for 10 seconds then gradually release.

At Work

Try to maintain a good posture and ensure your desk is at the correct height for you (approximately at elbow height).

If you have to adopt an awkward position for any length of time, make sure you straighten up

out of that position, ensuring you bring your shoulders, head and hips in line regularly.

Driving

Try to relax and position your seat upright this will allow you to practise tucking in your chin placing the back of your head against the headrest.

Recovering from a neck injury

If the pain seems to get worse, reduce the frequency of the exercises and move as far as comfortable until the pain eases. Keeping active will help your recovery .

If you don't manage to get back to normal activities within six weeks or your neck is not recovering at the rate you expect, please see your GP.

If you have any queries please contact the

Physiotherapy Departments at:

Daisy Hill Hospital	Tel: 028 37562935
Craigavon Area Hospital	Tel: 028 37563025
Armagh Community Hospital	Tel: 028 37564509
South Tyrone Hospital	Tel: 028 37565545

Physiotherapy Musculoskeletal Services July 2018 WG WG

Neck Sprain

Advice for Patients



HSC Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

Quality Care - for you, with you

This leaflet offers simple advice and exercises to help you safely manage your neck sprain, often the right advice and exercise is all that is needed.

Whiplash neck sprains occur when your head is suddenly jolted backwards and forwards in a whip-like movement causing some of your neck muscles and ligaments to stretch. The majority of whiplash injuries heal within a few weeks. Follow the advice and exercises with care. If any of the exercises make your pain worse, or you develop other symptoms such as dizziness or blurred vision, stop and seek medical advice.

You may have some of the following symptoms:-

- Neck pain and stiffness
- Loss of range of motion in the neck
- Worsening of pain with neck movement
- Tenderness of shoulders, upper back or arms
- Headaches

For Pain Relief

Take medication prescribed by your GP on a regular basis. Try not to rest your neck for prolonged periods by avoiding staying in the same position for too long e.g. sitting or lying.

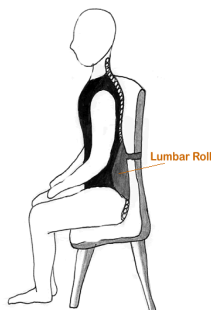
Heating the muscles around the neck and shoulders for 10-15 minutes throughout the day can help the muscles to relax and provide ease of pain.

Tense muscles caused by worry, stress or anxiety can cause an increase in discomfort and pain. You may find exercise, controlled breathing and relaxation helpful.

Posture

You can help reduce your neck pain by maintaining a good posture at all times, keeping mobility in the joints and reducing strain on muscles and ligaments

Sitting



Use an upright supportive chair rather than soft sofa. Sit well back and place a rolled up towel in the small of your back. Keep your shoulders in line with your hips and ensure your chin is not poking forward.

Sleeping

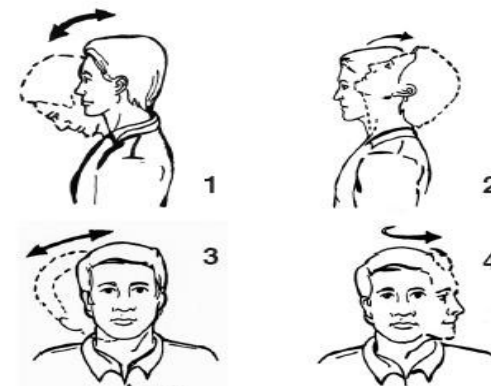
Sleep on a supportive mattress, avoid sleeping on your front as this strains the neck. If you sleep on your side, try to make sure your head and neck are straight and in line with the rest of your spine. This may require one pillow or two depending on their thickness and firmness.



Rehabilitation and Recovery Exercises

It is important to exercise your neck in to keep the joints mobile, muscles flexible, strong and to regain normal movement. Try to repeat these exercises ten times, three times per day. Each day stretch your neck a little further.

Exercises



1. Bend your head forwards, gently touching your chest with your chin. Hold for 5 seconds.
2. Bend your head backwards slowly to where it is comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. Tilt your head down towards your right shoulder and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat to opposite side.
4. Slowly turn your head to look over one shoulder, keeping your chin at the same level.