

HOW TO BE KIND TO YOUR NECK AND SHOULDERS

Sitting:

Keep your chin tucked in (not up) and your neck drawn back. Use a hard chair with support arms. Do not slouch; keep the entire length of your spine up against the back of the chair. Use the arms of the chair to support your arms, which will help prevent undue strain on your neck due to forward thrust.

Standing:

Keep your chin tucked in (not up) and your neck drawn back. Also try to stand with your lower back flat. Never bend over without bending your knees; this will better enable you to keep your neck and shoulders drawn back and erect.

Sleeping:

Do not sleep on your stomach. The preferable way to sleep is on your side. Maintain your neck and head in a normal position by adjusting your pillow accordingly (see illustration), and keep your arms down. If you prefer to sleep on your back, put your pillow under your neck as well as your head. The pillow should support the neck and head in a neutral position. Avoid extension of neck. It is advisable to use a bed board or a firm orthopedic mattress. You may also use a contoured pillow, instead of trying to manipulate a regular pillow under your neck.

Relaxing:

Do not lie on a sofa to watch television. Use a firm armchair. Do not use soft, fluffy pillows to prop up your head while reading.

Driving:

Sit high in the car. Your seat (preferably hard) should not be too far back or too low so that you will not have to stretch up and forward to see over the steering wheel. You may find a polyurethane pad of value in helping to provide support; it should be 1 to 2 inches thick, as wide as your back, and high enough to reach your shoulders.

Lifting or reaching:

Bend your knees and use your leg muscles to lift. Avoid sudden movements. Keep the load close to your body, and try not to lift anything higher than your waist. If you have to reach for a shelf higher than your head, stand on a stool. Try to avoid reaching or looking up for any length of time.

Working:

Do not overwork yourself. If you work at a desk all day, get up and move around whenever you get a chance. It may be advisable to do a set or two of your exercises during a break from work.

Self-massage:

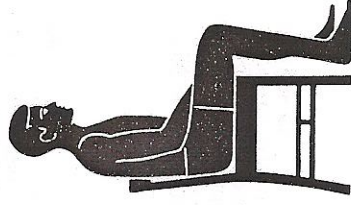
Massaging the neck and shoulder muscles often relaxes them and also serves to relieve tension and reduce spasm.

Exercise:

Get regular exercise (vigorous walking, bicycling, swimming, etc.) once your pain is gone. But always start slowly to give your muscles a chance to warm up before attempting anything strenuous.

See your doctor:

If your neck or shoulder acts up . . . if the pain gets worse . . . see your doctor; don't wait until your condition gets too severe.



EXERCISES FOR THE PAINFUL NECK AND SHOULDER

General Information:

Do not overdo exercising, especially in the beginning. Start by trying the movements slowly and carefully.

Don't be alarmed if an exercise causes some mild discomfort which lasts a few minutes. However, stop doing any exercise that aggravates pre-existing pain. That is, do not force movement past the point of pain (unless instructed to do so by your doctor). If the pain is more than mild and lasts more than 15 or 20 minutes, do no further exercises until you see your doctor.

Isotonic Exercises (contraction with movement):

These exercises will restore movement to the injured area, as well as help relieve pain associated with stiffness. (Exercises 1 to 4: neck; exercises 5 and 6: neck and shoulder; exercises 7 and 8: shoulder.)

Isometric Exercises (contraction without movement):

These exercises will help restore and maintain muscle strength to the injured neck or shoulder. Do not hold your breath while doing an isometric exercise; breathe out vigorously as you strain during the exercises.

Moist Heat (during or before exercise):

Moist heat will help relieve pain by increasing the blood flow to the muscles. You can often increase the effectiveness of isotonic exercises by performing them in a hot shower, after a hot shower, or following the application of hot, moist towels. However, in some injuries, and especially during the first day after an injury occurs, you may obtain added relief from pain by the application of cold instead.

Do the following exercises _____ times a day:

1-4 5-6 7-8 Other _____

Take the medication prescribed for you _____ times daily for _____

TWO-WEEK DIARY

Medication for relief of muscle pain/spasm	1st Week							2nd Week						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
a.m.														
noon														
p.m.														
p.m.														
Prescribed exercises														

FOLD HERE