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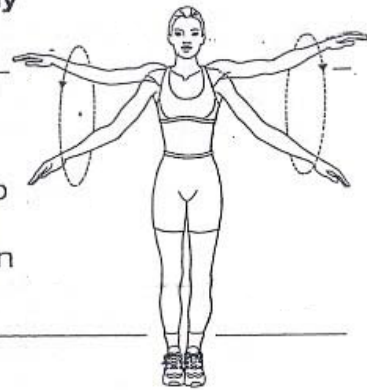
Exercises to help prevent neck pain

Increasing the flexibility and strength of your neck muscles can greatly decrease the risk of future injuries and pain. Although medicine (including muscle relaxants) can ease the pain and relax tight muscles, it cannot stop spasms from returning. Remember to **start slowly** and increase the repetitions as you feel stronger and more comfortable with the exercises.

NOTE: Your health care professional may recommend some or all of these exercises. Ask him or her which ones are appropriate. Discontinue any exercises that cause pain immediately and contact your health care professional.

Warming up before exercise

All exercise should start with a brief warm-up period to help increase blood flow in the muscles. Gently shrugging your shoulders and swinging your arms are good ways to loosen up your muscles.

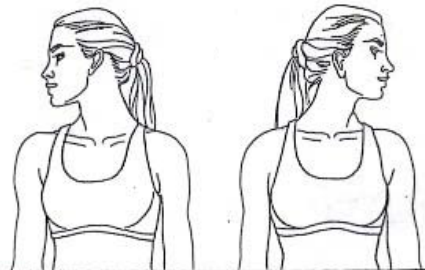


Getting in position

Neck exercises can easily be performed standing or in a seated position. Use good posture in either position and look forward. Try to keep your back and neck straight.

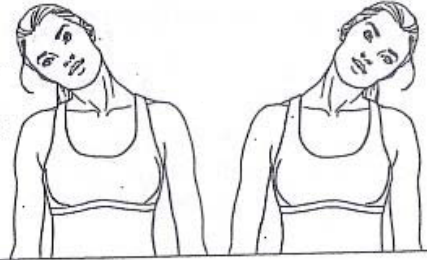
Neck rotations

Look forward. With a slow, steady movement, rotate your head to the right side and hold for 10 seconds. Return to the forward position and rotate to the left side. Hold for 10 seconds and return to the forward position. Repeat the exercise 10 times on each side.



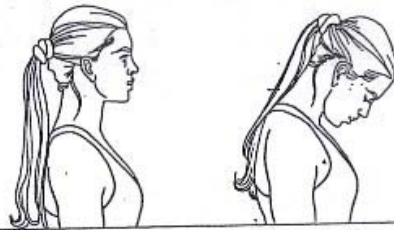
□ Neck side extensions

Looking forward, let your head lower slowly over to the right side as far as you feel comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the forward position. Repeat the movement on the left side and return to the forward position. Repeat the exercise 10 times.



□ Neck forward flexion

Looking forward, slowly lower your head toward your chest. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the forward position. Repeat the exercise 10 times.



□ Neck stretch

Look forward and slowly raise your shoulders up toward your ears. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly release them and return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise 10 times.

