

Neck pain

Information and advice

Neck pain can be caused by many different things. It might be that you're not sitting correctly at your office desk, you're coping with stress or you've recently had a sports injury.

There are different things you can do to help reduce neck pain and improve your recovery.

What to do if you have neck pain

Medication

Painkillers can help reduce any discomfort you have. However if they're not helping, your GP may be able to prescribe something else.

Driving

Provided you can look over both shoulders, you can return to driving when you're ready. If you're driving on long journeys, remember to take regular breaks, walk around and stretch your neck and shoulders.

At home

A firm pillow which you can adjust may help support your neck when you sleep. The way you sit in chairs can help prevent you straining your neck further. Depending on your needs, it's unlikely you'll need to buy new furniture to help with your recovery.

At work

Stay at work if possible, and remember to move, stretch and change position regularly. If you work in an office, make sure your chair fits you and supports your back. Arrange your desk so that you can reach things like your computer and phone without straining your neck.

Manual Activity, Gardening and Housework

If you're still doing activities, give yourself enough time and take regular breaks. When lifting, it may help to use your legs more and to kneel down to do things rather than bending forward.

Exercise

Keeping active has been shown to help relieve pain. When you're ready start with simple, gentle exercises. Gradually start to build up your routine when you feel able. Be careful not to over tense your shoulders. When walking let your arms swing and remember to breathe normally.

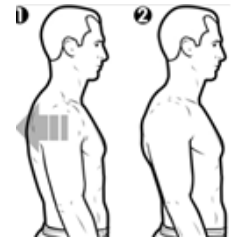
Exercises

These exercises may help reduce your neck pain. You can do them standing or sitting. Follow the steps below slowly, but stop if you feel uncomfortable.

- Turn your head slowly to look over your left shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs. Then turn to look over your right shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Shrug shoulders up, back and around. Hold for 5-10 secs then relax
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Sitting in a chair with your arms across your chest, turn your trunk to the right and hold for 5 secs. Then turn to the left
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Tilt your head slowly towards your left shoulder, and hold for 5-10 secs. Return to the middle and tilt to your right shoulder, and hold for 5-10 secs
- Repeat each side 5 times



- Stretch both hands over your head as high as possible
- Hold for 5-10 secs
- Repeat each side 5 times



If you feel these exercises are making your symptoms worse, take a break. You can also speak to your GP for further help. This doesn't mean it's anything too serious. It may be that you need some extra help to deal with the symptoms, and you may be referred to a physiotherapist.

How to contact us

If you need to contact us or require further information...

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Call 0300 365 5678

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