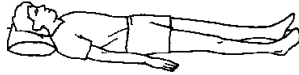


## How can I improve my posture?

- Poor posture can often lead to neck pain and stiffness.
- Ensure you take regular breaks from prolonged sitting or standing. Do not stay in one position for more than 20-30 minutes.
- Check that your bed is not too soft.

- Use a pillow that supports the hollow of your neck.



Do not sleep with more pillows than necessary; usually one firm pillow when you lie on your back and maybe a second when lying on your side.

- Ensuring your office/home work space is set-up correctly, can help reduce your neck pain.



- Keep active;

## General Advice

maintain your normal daily activities but spread them throughout the day as much as possible to avoid further flare ups.

## General Advice

- Keep your body healthy in the long run, with regular exercise— it keeps your muscles strong and bones healthy. It also makes you feel good and most importantly will help prevent future problems.
- Keep stress levels as low as possible and find effective ways to relax.
- If your symptoms get worse, or do not improve please seek further medical advice.

If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

إذا كنت لا تستطيع فهم محتويات هذه النشرة فيمكننا عمل الترتيبات لتوفير مترجم شفوي لك.

এই প্রচারপুস্তিকাটি যদি আপনি বুঝতে না পারেন, তবে আপনার জন্য আমরা একজন অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করে দিতে পারি

如你不明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

如你不明白本傳單的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمی‌فهمید، ما می‌توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.

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### Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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Brighton and Sussex **NHS**  
University Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## Neck Pain Advice for Patients



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## What causes neck pain?

- Most neck pain is caused by strain and tension in the muscles.
- This is often due to poor posture whilst working or driving, putting extra strain on the muscles and joints in your neck.
- It can also be caused by more sudden forceful movements which may occur in car accidents, known as 'whiplash'.
- It can occur as a result of sleeping in an uncomfortable neck position.
- Stress and tension can also cause pain.
- Sometimes, there is no obvious reason for developing neck pain and stiffness.

## What are the symptoms?

- Pain
- Reduced movement
- Stiffness
- Muscle spasm

## How long will it take to recover?

- Most neck pain gets better by itself but there is good evidence that gentle activity speeds up recovery and prevents the pain from becoming persistent.
- It is good to return to normal activities as soon as possible as this will help maintain the movement in your neck.
- The majority of simple strains do not cause lasting problems as the body is very good at healing itself.

## What treatments can I use?

### Pain Killers

- If your GP has prescribed pain killers, then these should be taken at the recommended dose.

### Hot or Cold Packs

- Gentle heat (hot water bottle) can help reduce muscle spasm and pain. A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can produce short-term pain relief. Use whichever pack you find the most helpful. Apply to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every two hours.

### Relaxation

- Learning to relax your muscles can also be very useful if your neck pain is made worse by stress.

### Massage

- Gentle soft tissue massage around the neck, shoulders and upper back may help relaxation and reduce pain.

### Early Movement and Exercise

- Simple exercises can be performed to help restore the movement in your neck preventing stiffness.
- Getting stiff muscles and joints moving is often uncomfortable to start with but becomes much easier as you regain flexibility.

## Exercises for your neck

Sit comfortably in an upright chair:

1. Bend your neck slowly forwards and return to the centre.



2. Pull your chin in, keeping your neck and back straight. Feel the stretch in your neck.



3. Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Repeat on the other side.



4. Tilt your head toward one shoulder until you feel the stretch. Repeat on the other side.



Exercise Illustrations: © PhysioTools Ltd

**Please note:** These exercises should not increase your pain. Perform each exercise gently and slowly, only moving as far as feels comfortable. Hold each stretch for 5 seconds. Perform each exercise up to 10 times, 2 or 3 times a day. If your pain increases significantly, stop the exercises and consult your GP or physiotherapist before continuing.