

Neck Pain Exercises

This handout provides a set of exercises designed to alleviate neck pain. These exercises are intended to strengthen neck muscles, improve flexibility, and enhance posture. Please consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise regimen.

1. Neck stretches

Side bend stretch

- **Purpose:** Stretches the side neck muscles.
- **Instructions:** Sit or stand upright. Slowly tilt your head toward your shoulder until you feel a stretch on the opposite side. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

Forward and backward tilt

- **Purpose:** Stretches the neck muscles at the front and back.
 - **Instructions:** Tilt your head forward, trying to touch your chin to your chest. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Gently tilt your head back and hold for 20-30 seconds.
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2. Shoulder rolls

- **Purpose:** Relieves tension in the neck and shoulders.
 - **Instructions:** Raise your shoulders up towards your ears, then roll them back and down. Repeat 10 times in both directions.
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3. Chin tucks

- **Purpose:** Strengthens the neck muscles and improves posture.
 - **Instructions:** Sit or stand with your spine aligned. Pull your chin straight back, creating a "double chin." Hold for 5 seconds, then release. Repeat 10 times.
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4. Isometric neck exercises

- **Purpose:** Strengthens the neck without moving it.
- **Instructions:**
 - **Frontal resistance:** Place your hand on your forehead. Push your head against your hand without moving your head. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 5 times.
 - **Lateral resistance:** Place your hand on the side of your head. Push your head against your hand without moving your head to the side. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side.

5. Levator scapula stretch

- **Purpose:** Stretches the levator scapula muscle, which can become tight from poor posture and stress.
 - **Instructions:** Sit or stand with your back straight. Bring your right arm up over your head, placing your right hand on the back of your left shoulder. Gently turn your head to the right and tilt it down as if looking under your right armpit. Hold for 20-30 seconds, then switch sides.
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6. Seated neck release

- **Purpose:** Relieves tension in the side of your neck.
 - **Instructions:** Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the ground. Place your left hand on the right side of your head, and tilt your head to the left, applying gentle pressure with your hand. Hold for 20-30 seconds, then switch sides.
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7. Cervical spine extension

- **Purpose:** Increases mobility in the cervical spine.
 - **Instructions:** Lie on your back with a small pillow under your head. Slowly lift your head off the pillow, extending your neck backward as far as comfortable. Hold for a few seconds, then return to the starting position. Repeat 5-10 times.
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8. Scapular squeeze

- **Purpose:** Strengthens the muscles around the shoulder blades and upper back, improving posture and reducing neck strain.
 - **Instructions:** Sit or stand with your arms at your sides. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as if trying to hold a pencil between them. Hold for 5 seconds, then release. Repeat 10 times.
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9. Neck rotations

- **Purpose:** Improves neck mobility and flexibility.
 - **Instructions:** Sit or stand with your head squarely over your shoulders. Slowly turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold for 20-30 seconds, then slowly rotate to the other side. Repeat 3 times on each side.
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Disclaimer: If any exercise causes increased pain or discomfort, stop immediately and consult your healthcare provider.