

THE FIT NECK WORKOUT

NECK EXERCISES

- 
- Stretching
 - Strengthening
 - Charting Your Progress

BUILD YOUR NECK POWER

Is your neck tight, sore, or painful? Do you want to strengthen your neck muscles and feel better? A simple exercise program supervised by your healthcare professional can help ease your pain and build your neck power. So start now. Work out those neck muscles at your desk, at home—any time at all. A healthy neck feels great!

How To Use This Booklet

Here you'll find many easy and effective exercises for stretching and strengthening your neck. When done right, the exercises are safe for most people. Your healthcare professional may add special instructions to fit your needs. For best results, remember to:

- Do the exercises every day, or as instructed.
- Go through each exercise **slowly**, without bouncing. Breathe normally.
- Avoid stretching your neck too far in any direction. Stay within a range that is comfortable for you.
- **Stop any exercise** if you feel tingling, sharp pain, numbness, or dizziness.

This booklet is not intended as a substitute for professional healthcare. Check with your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

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POSTURE-PERFECT SITTING

Sitting with good posture may not seem like a workout. But it is important for a healthy neck. When you sit, keep your neck and the rest of your spine in line. To sit properly:

- **Keep your ears aligned** over your shoulders and hips. Don't slouch.
- **Tuck your chin in** slightly to avoid putting stress on your neck and shoulder muscles.
- **Keep your elbows level** with the space bar when typing.
- **Support your lower back** by sitting firmly against the back of your chair. If more support is needed, place a small towel roll or a lumbar roll behind your lower back.
- **Adjust your chair** so that your eyes are no higher than the top of the screen. Also, keep your shoes on the ground. This helps your head stay balanced.

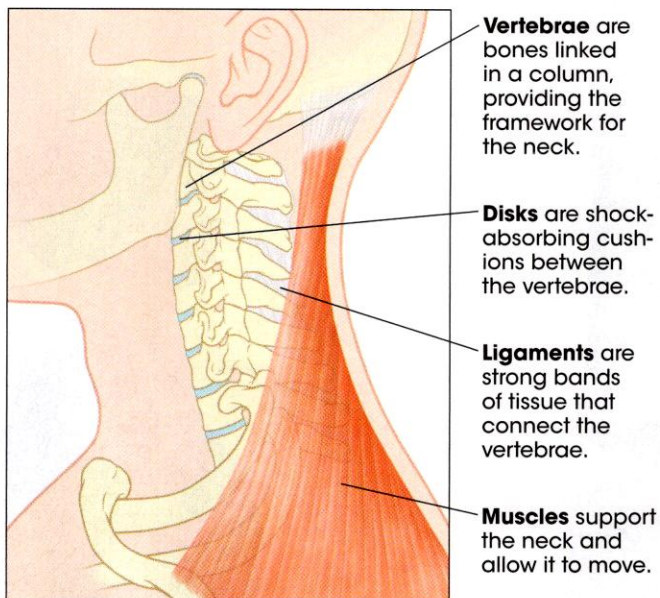


YOUR NECK IN MOTION

Your neck does a lot more than just hold up your head. Whether you're sitting still or on the move, your neck provides flexibility and support to play sports, drive a car, look down at a child, or look up at the sky.

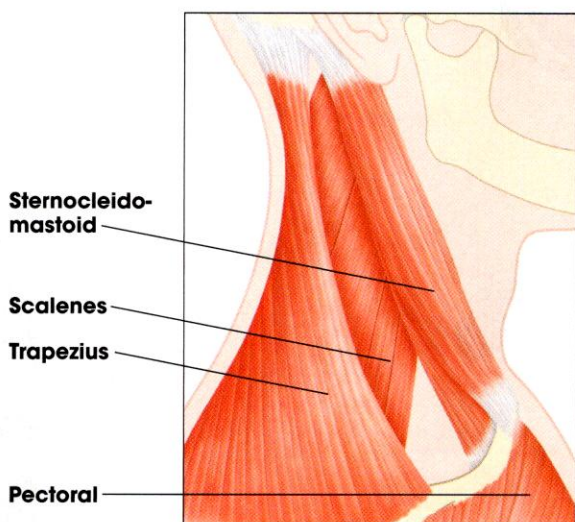
STRENGTH AND SUPPORT

A strong and flexible neck is important. That's because it has to support the entire weight of your head—about 15 pounds. The neck includes the top seven bones (**vertebrae**) of the spine. These bones are aligned in a slight curve and move more than any other bones in the spine. Sturdy but flexible ligaments connect the vertebrae and help support your head.

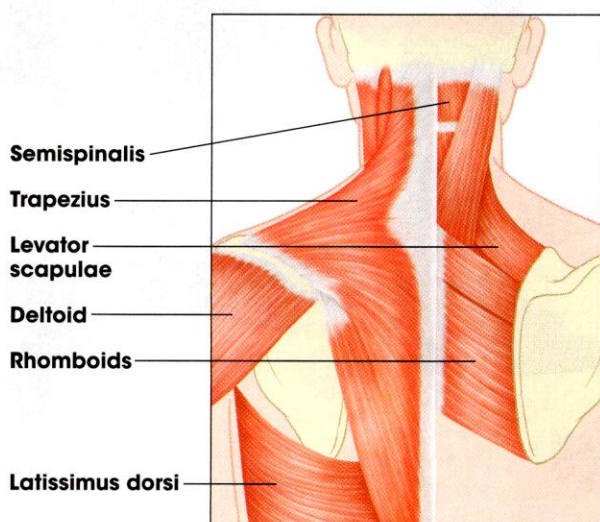


MUSCLES AT WORK

Your neck muscles work with muscles in your shoulders, chest, and back. Keeping all these muscles strong and flexible helps support the bones, joints, and ligaments in your neck. If you don't exercise these muscles, they're likely to become stiff and weak.



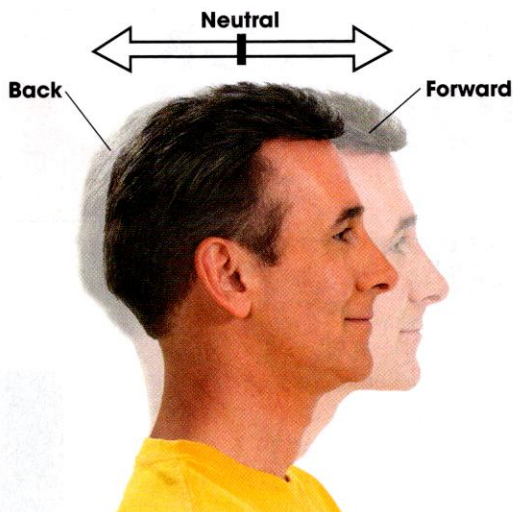
Side View



Back View

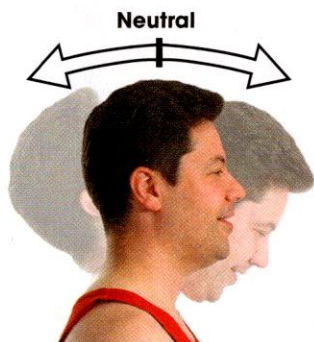
FINDING YOUR NEUTRAL POSITION

Neck muscles can become sore when your head is not properly balanced. To prevent neck strain, keep your head in the **neutral position** as much as possible. To find this position, slowly move your head forward, then backward. The point where your head is comfortably balanced above your shoulders is your neutral position.



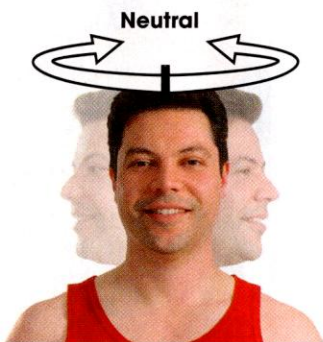
BASIC NECK MOVEMENTS

The motions of a healthy, flexible neck consist of several basic movements. Each movement has its own **range of motion** (the amount of movement that is possible under normal conditions). To avoid injury, stay within the range of motion that is safe for you. If you're not sure about your range of motion, talk to your healthcare professional. Basic neck movements include:



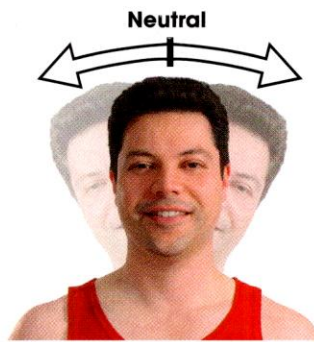
FLEXING & EXTENDING

Your neck **flexes** when you look down. It **extends** when you look up.



ROTATING

Your neck **rotates** when you turn it from side to side.



SIDE BENDING

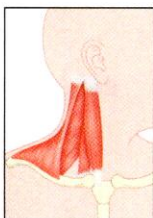
Your neck **side bends** when you lean your head toward your shoulder.

WORKING OUT YOUR NECK

The exercises on the following pages help build strength and flexibility in your neck. Do the exercises whenever you have time. Remember to start each exercise with your head in the neutral position. Also, use slow, steady movements. The more you practice, the better you and your neck will feel.



ACTIVE NECK ROTATION

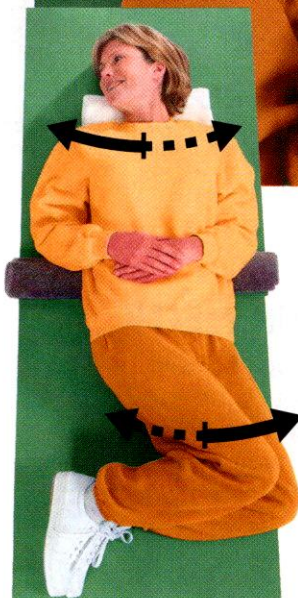
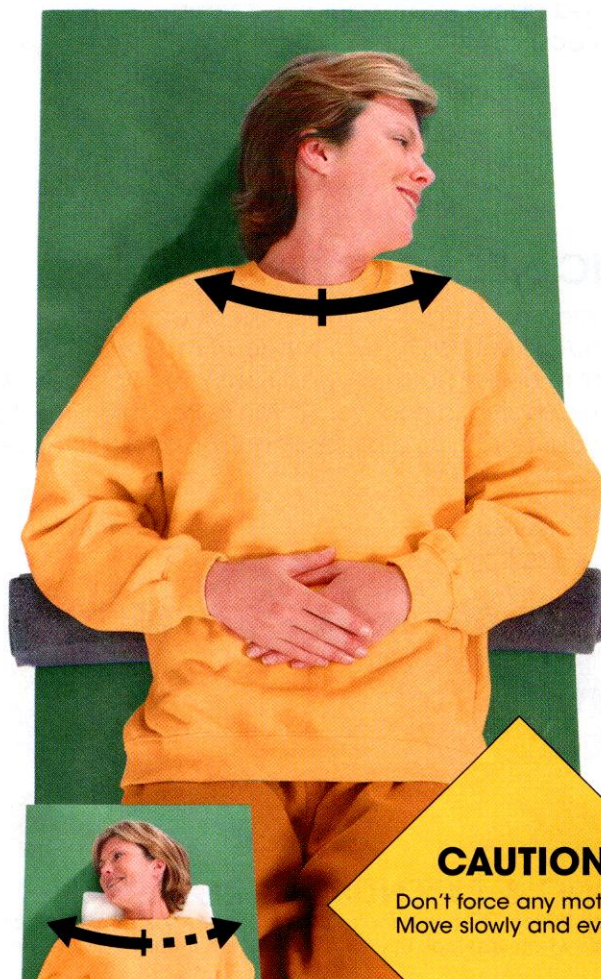


This exercise stretches and relaxes your neck muscles. It also helps improve your flexibility for head-turning activities, like backing your car out of a driveway.

HOW TO

1 With your head in the neutral position, lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. For extra comfort, place a rolled-up towel or neck roll under your neck. Your healthcare provider may also recommend using a lumbar roll for lower back support.

2 Turn your head slowly to one side, keeping your chin level. Try to touch your shoulder with your chin. Hold for 10 seconds. Then turn your head to the other side. Repeat 5 times to each side, bringing your head back to the neutral position between each turn.

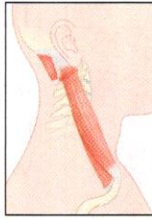


Challenge Yourself

Rotate your legs and lower body in the opposite direction of your head and neck. Repeat 5 times in each direction.

Special Instructions

FACE CLOCK



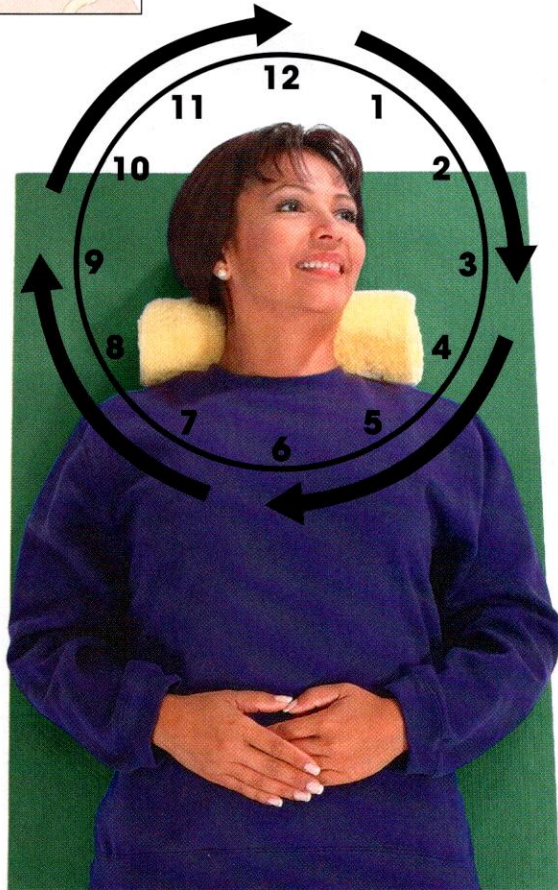
This exercise increases your neck's mobility for front-facing activities, such as working at a computer or reading a book.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on your back with your head in the neutral position, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. Place a rolled-up towel or neck roll under your neck.
- 2 Imagine facing a clock. With your nose, slowly trace the outer edge of the clock. Move clockwise first, then counterclockwise. Repeat 5 times in each direction.

CAUTION

Move your neck slowly and smoothly. Stay in a comfortable range.



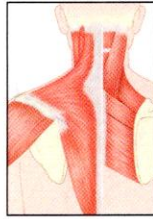
Special Instructions



Try This

At work, do the Face Clock on your breaks, after lunch, and before you go home. Sit up straight with your back supported firmly against your chair.

NECK FLEX



This exercise stretches muscles from the top of your neck to your shoulder blades. It also relaxes areas that get stiff when you do a lot of sitting.

HOW TO

- 1 Sit up straight with your neck in the neutral position. For support, rest your left forearm against your lower back. Put your right hand behind your head.
- 2 Gently push your head forward and down, keeping your chin tucked. Hold for 10 seconds. Return to the neutral position and repeat 5 times.

CAUTION

Don't force your head down with your hand. Use gentle pressure to increase the stretch.

Special Instructions



SIDE BEND



This exercise loosens neck and shoulder muscles that often tighten with stress.

HOW TO

1 Sit up straight with your neck in the neutral position. Hold the edge of your chair with your right hand. Tuck your chin in slightly and tilt your head to the left, keeping your chin pointed down and toward the right.

2 Place your left hand on the upper right side of your head. Gently pull your head to the left. Hold for 10 seconds, then return to the neutral position. Repeat 5 times. Switch sides and do this exercise 5 more times.

CAUTION

Don't force your head. Use gentle pressure to increase the stretch.

Special Instructions



Challenge Yourself

Tuck one end of a towel under your left arm. Then bring the other end over your right shoulder. Pull the towel down with both hands as you side bend your head to the left. Repeat with the other side.

REACH AND PULL



This exercise relieves tension between your shoulder blades and across your chest. It also stretches muscles that get tight when you spend long periods in one position.

HOW TO

- 1** Reach forward with both arms parallel to the floor. Clasp your hands and lower your chin toward your chest. Round your shoulders, feeling the stretch between your shoulder blades. Hold for 10 seconds.
- 2** Unclasp your hands and return your head to the neutral position. With palms facing forward, bend your elbows and bring your forearms back until your palms are past your ears. Feel the stretch in your front chest muscles. Return to the starting position and repeat both steps 5 times.

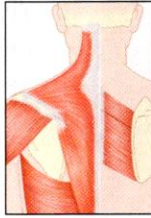


Special Instructions

CAUTION

Don't push your arms too far behind you.

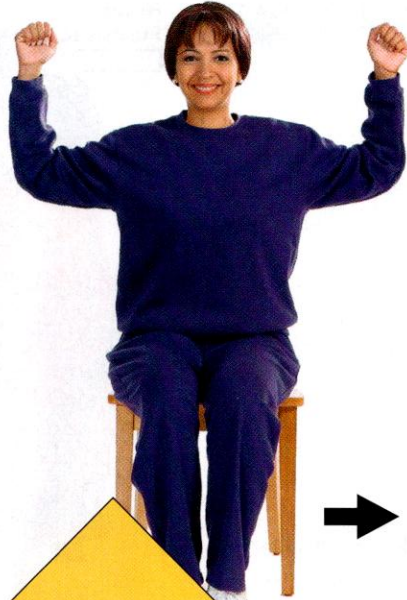
SHOULDER STRETCH



This exercise increases flexibility in your shoulders, chest, and upper back. This helps with pushing, pulling, and reaching activities.

HOW TO

- 1 With your head in the neutral position, raise your arms to your sides until they're parallel with the floor. Bend your elbows and don't let them drop below shoulder height.
- 2 Make relaxed fists and pull your forearms together until they touch. Round your shoulders to feel the stretch between your shoulder blades. Hold for 10 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 5 times.
- 3 Bend your left arm in front of you and hold it with your right hand, just beside the elbow. Then pull your left elbow across the front of your body. Hold for 10 seconds and switch sides. Repeat 5 times with each arm.



CAUTION

Don't force the stretch. Use slow, steady movements.



Special Instructions

HEAD PRESS



This exercise uses resistance to strengthen your neck muscles. This helps you with stationary activities like reading, talking, or watching a movie.

HOW TO

1 Sit up straight with your head in the neutral position. Place your right palm against your forehead. Push your head against your hand while resisting with your arm muscles—so your head doesn't move. Hold for 10 seconds, then slowly relax the pressure. Repeat 5 times.



2 Move your palm to the side of your head. Press 5 times. Repeat on the other side.



3 Place your palm on the back of your head. Repeat the exercise, pressing 5 times with the back of your head.



CAUTION

- Don't press so hard that you cause pain or your head shakes.
- Don't let your head move in any direction.

Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Try placing your palms on each side of your head. Rapidly press your head back and forth against each hand.



HEAD LIFTS



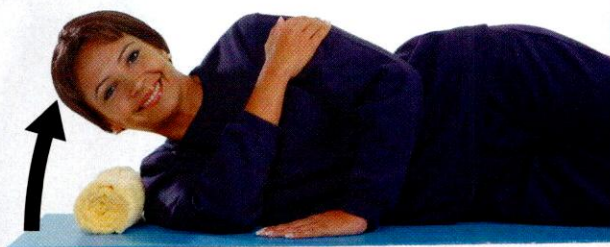
This exercise strengthens your neck muscles. It also improves your flexibility for activities that require frequent head-turning.

HOW TO

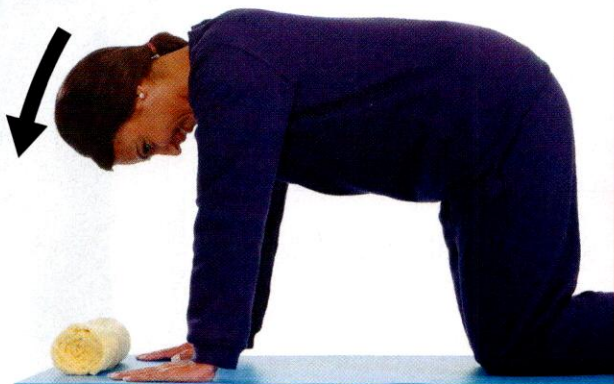
1 Lie on your back with your head in the neutral position, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor. For support, place a neck roll or towel under your neck. Tuck your chin and lift your head toward your chest, keeping your shoulders on the floor. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.



2 Turn onto your right side. Place your right palm on your left shoulder. Lift your head slowly toward your left shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times. Switch to your left side and repeat the exercise.



3 Get on your hands and knees, looking down at the floor. With your head and back in a straight line, let your head slowly drop toward your chest. Tuck your chin, and hold for 10 seconds. Then lift your head until your neck is level with your back. Repeat 5 times.

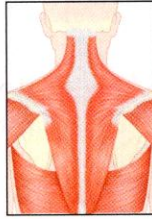


Special Instructions

CAUTION

During Step 3, avoid lifting your head higher than your shoulders.

ARM LIFTS



This exercise strengthens neck, shoulder, and back muscles. It also helps with lifting and reaching activities, such as painting, swimming, and tennis.

HOW TO

- 1 Keeping your head in the neutral position, stand with your back straight.
- 2 Alternately raise one arm and push back with the other, keeping your arms straight. Move in slow, smooth arcs. Hold at the end of motion for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

CAUTION
If you have shoulder pain, talk with your healthcare professional before trying this exercise.

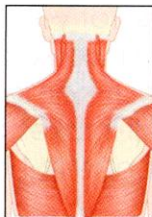


Challenge Yourself

Press one hand against a wall while lifting the other. Then repeat with the opposite hand against the wall.

Special Instructions

REACH AND HOLD



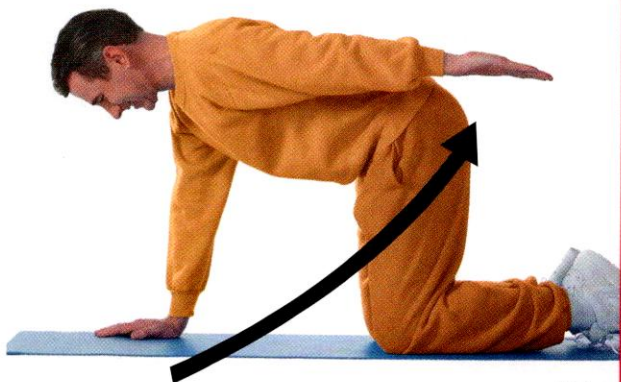
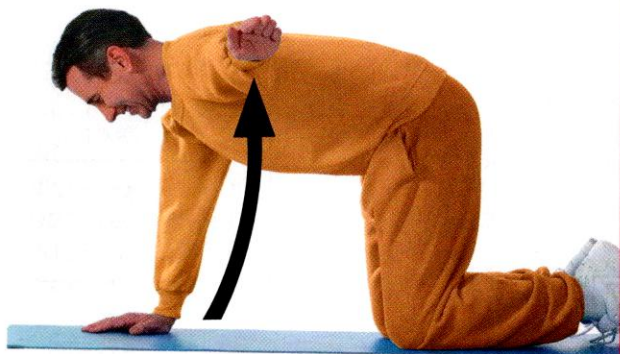
This exercise develops strength and control in your shoulder, neck, and back muscles. It also helps build endurance for all of your daily activities.

HOW TO

- 1 Get on your hands and knees. Spread your knees apart under your hips. Then put your head in the neutral position.
- 2 With palm down, raise your right arm straight ahead of you. Hold for 5 seconds, then lower your arm. Switch sides and repeat 3 times with each arm.
- 3 Repeat the exercise, lifting your arm out to the side. Raise each arm 3 times.
- 4 Repeat the exercise. With palm up, lift your arm to the back. Raise each arm 3 times.

CAUTION

If you have shoulder pain, talk with your healthcare professional before trying this exercise.



Special Instructions

CHART YOUR PROGRESS

Check the upper half of the box each day you do a morning workout. Check the lower half if you exercise in the evening. And congratulate yourself for your good work!

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With the help of your healthcare professional, you can design a workout plan that fits your needs. Try working out at home, at the office, or wherever you have time. All it takes is a few minutes a day to make a real difference in how you and your neck feel.

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	PM							
<p>Talk to your healthcare professional about adding low-impact aerobic exercises, such as walking and swimming, to your Fit Neck Workout.</p>								