

The “golden rules”

“Good posture should be a way of life. Every position you use, especially those used regularly, should be analysed”.

“Perfect posture all of the time is not possible, therefore regular adjustments are necessary”.

“Full range of motion is maintained by using your full range of motion. If you don't keep it, you will lose it”.

“keeping your chin tucked, and chest elevated is a good start for good posture”

“Regular exercise that involves resistance, will help to make your neck muscles have improved tone”

“Ask your Physiotherapist if your pillow is too high”

“Stop slouching - so much”

Discussion

The best way to prevent injury is to have strong, flexible muscles and joints that resist strain and injury. The back and neck respond to movement. Putting the back in a static position for long periods of time, such as sitting, lying down or driving etc, will increase the potential of back or neck sprain. The best prevention for neck and back sprain is movement. Adjust your body position regularly. Activity association can be used as a tool to remind you about postural correction, eg every time the telephone rings straighten up, or during an advertising break - go for a walk.



Retraction

This is one of the most useful neck movements as it counteracts the tendency we all have of allowing our heads to poke forwards in a poor posture. Keep your face straight ahead during the whole movement, drawing the head back and the chin down slightly. Hold for a moment.

Shoulder

Shoulder and neck muscles are closely related. A problem with one, can cause a problem with the other. All shoulder muscles are attached to your shoulder girdle. Basically, for every two degrees your arm elevates, the shoulder blade rotates one degree. This is controlled by mid back and neck muscles. So a lifting injury can cause a neck injury.

Neck Exercises

There is no absolute right or wrong way. The important point is that you use smooth controlled motion at all times, don't jerk or bounce at all. Some of the exercises are best repeated 5-20 times, while others are best held for several seconds

Photographs and content prepared by Kapiti Coast Physiotherapy Limited

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Neck Stretches and Postural Advice

*“Please read the back page
for instructions”*

*“Improving Your
Performance”*

www.kcphysio.co.nz

Neck Stretches

“the key to good posture and reduced tightness”



Cervical Retraction

Also known as “chin tucks”. Sit or stand as straight as possible. Using your fingers, apply gentle pressure to your chin, pushing it backwards as far as comfortably possible. Perfect posture is said to be 10% less than full range of motion.



Cervical Extension

Sit or stand as straight as possible. Chin tuck as described above. Tilt your head back as far as possible. If your physiotherapist allows, this can be completed lying down with your head over a bed end.

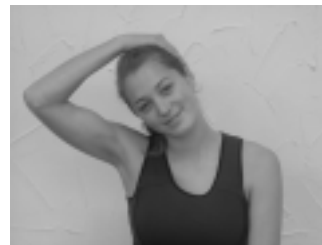


Cervical Flexion

This is best done while sitting. Keep your back as straight as possible. Gently pull your head forward and down as far as possible. You will feel a stretch up the back of your neck.

Cervical Rotation

Sit or stand as straight as possible. Tuck your chin. Turn your head as far as possible in each direction. This can be added to cervical extension. This can be done lying down. You could use your hand to facilitate more movement by pressing on your chin.



Cervical Side flexion

Sit or stand as straight as possible. Chin tuck as described previously. Gently pull your head over as far as comfortable. Allow the opposite shoulder to relax downward.

Upper Back Extension

This can be done standing or kneeling, or with hands on a wall or on the floor. Arch your upper back as much as possible.



Neural Tension Stretches

Possibly the most important of all stretches. These stretches can be very helpful for neck tension/headaches.

Neural Tissue is nerve tissue. It is important that you not only stretch muscles and ligaments, but also your nerves. To stretch the nerves you need to learn specific stretches from your physiotherapist. 2 examples are below.

Neck and Arm



Sit or stand as straight as possible with your hand turned either downward, backward or upward pressing onto a wall (swimmers or chest type stretch). Gently pull your head to the side as far as possible. Chin tuck as described previously.

Neck and Upper Back

Gently pull the head over as far as it will comfortably go. Keep your legs straight and your toes pointed upward.



Visit our 'Self Care' section on the web at www.kcpphysio.co.nz