
Exercises for Neck Pain

Neck pain is becoming more common, due to time spent hunched over desks, at computers, texting on cell phones, and driving. The constant position of being hunched over tightens chest muscles and neck extensor muscles, while weakening neck flexor muscles and upper back muscles.

Aerobic Exercise Recommendations

With neck pain, the best modes of aerobic exercise are ones that are low impact. Some suggestions include:

- Walking
- Stationary cycling
 - Elliptical machine (holding central stationary bars, using a short stride length, and going at a fairly slow pace)
- Swimming (breast stroke would be a good option)

To receive maximal health benefits, aerobic exercise should be done at a moderate intensity for 30 minutes, 5 days per week.

Exercise: Rows

Description:

- Using a Theraband or tubing wrapped around a doorknob at approximately elbow-height, hold each end of the tubing and stand at a distance that the tubing is straight with a bit of tension.
- Bend your arms, driving your elbows back and squeezing your shoulder blades together to pull the tubing to either side of you. Pause, and slowly return to start. Perform 12-15 repetitions



Exercise: Chin Tucks

Description:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, with a towel under the back of your neck.
- Keeping your head on the towel, draw your chin back and slightly down towards your neck.
- You should feel a light stretch down the back of your neck.
- Hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Exercise: Wall Angels

Description:

- Stand with feet greater than hip width apart, with your back against a wall. Extend your arms to your sides, with elbows bent at 90 degrees and hands pointing up.
- Keeping your spine, backside, elbows, and hands against the wall, slide your hands up to straighten your arms. Pause, then slide arms back to starting position.
- Repeat 10-12 times.



Exercise: Doorway Chest Stretch

Description:

- Place your left elbow and palm on a doorframe, keeping your elbow at a 90 degree angle.
- Place your right foot slightly in front of your left.
- Using the doorframe as leverage, lean forwards slightly.
- Hold for 30-60 seconds. To increase the stretch, lift your elbow a bit higher up on the doorframe.



Exercise: Sternocleidomastoid (side-neck muscles) Stretch

Description:

- From a standing position, firmly flex your left arm by your side.
- With your right hand, reach over the top of your head to gently pull your neck to the right, as if trying to get your ear to reach your shoulder.
- Hold for 30-60 seconds, breathing deeply.



Exercise: Neck Extensor Stretch

Description:

- Sit in a chair with your back supported. Rest your hands in your lap. Tuck your chin in towards your chest to look down at your breastbone. Hold for 3 deep breaths. You should feel a gentle stretch. Repeat 5 times.
- If you do not feel an adequate stretch, you can clasp your hands behind your head with your elbows pointing forwards to add some extra weight to the stretch. Do not pull down with any muscular effort- the weight of your hands should be enough.

