

Neck Exercises



Upper Back Stretching

Instructions: Sitting or standing. Gently, pull one elbow toward the opposite shoulder. Hold it for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other arm. Do the exercise up to 10 times.

Objective: To stretch upper back muscles, primarily shoulder blade muscles.

Caution: If you have shoulder problems and experience pain at the shoulder joint level, stop this exercise.

Special Instructions: To increase the stretch, round your back while pulling the elbow to the opposite direction.

Neck Rotation

Instructions: Gently turn your head toward the left side, guiding the chin toward the left shoulder. Repeat this on the other side. Do this exercise for up to 10 times.

Objective: To stretch the neck rotator muscles, to increase flexibility.

Caution: Avoid tilting the head backwards or forward while doing this exercise. If the movement provokes dizziness or pain radiating to the arm, do not perform this exercise.

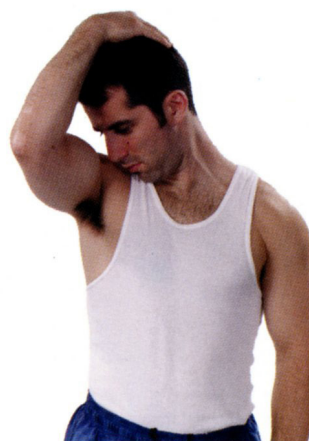


Neck Stretch

Instructions: Turn your head to your right side, about 45 degrees of rotation. With right hand grab the back of your head and gently pull it downward in the direction of your armpit. Hold it for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Do this exercise for up to 10 times.

Objective: To stretch the shoulder blade and neck muscles.

Caution: Avoid twisting the neck while pulling the head down. If the movement provokes dizziness or pain radiating to the arm, do not perform this exercise.



Neck Side Bending

Instructions: Tilt head toward right shoulder. Place the right hand on the top of your head and gently pull it toward your right shoulder. Hold it for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Do this exercise for up to 10 times.

Objective: To stretch the muscles in the side of the neck.

Caution: Avoid elevating the shoulder while performing this exercise. If the movement provokes dizziness or pain radiating to the arm, do not perform this exercise.



Chin Tucks

Instructions: Move your chin straight back without moving head forward. Keep your eyes focused straight ahead. Hold it for 10 seconds. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

Objective: To improve your head and neck posture.

Caution: Do not allow your chin to drop to your chest or your head to drop back. If the movement provokes dizziness or pain radiating to the arm, do not perform this exercise.

Upper Trunk Stretch

Instructions: Place both hands against wall with elbows straight and curve the upper back while looking down. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat up to 10 times.

Objective: To stretch the upper back muscles.

Caution: Discomfort in the wrist, shoulders or neck should be avoided.



Palm Press

Instructions: Clasp the fingers at the base of the skull and press your head into your hands without moving.

Objective: To strengthen the neck extensors.

Caution: Keep the chin tucked while performing this exercise. Pain in the shoulders should be avoided. If the movement provokes dizziness or pain radiating to the arm, do not perform this exercise.

Special Instructions: Do not hold your breath while performing isometric exercises.

Neck Isometric Forward Flexion

Instructions: Place both hands against the forehead and gently press the hands against the forehead.

Objective: To strengthen the neck flexors.

Caution: Do not let the chin lift.



Elbow Press

Instructions: Standing or sitting. Bring the elbows up to your chest level. Gently press the elbows backward and hold for a count of five seconds.

Objective: To decrease muscular tightness in your mid-back and stretch the chest muscles.

Caution: Pain in the thoracic spine should be avoided.

Mid-back Strengthening

Instructions: Lying on your stomach, place your hands over your head with the elbows at shoulder level. Lift both arms off the floor and hold for five seconds.

Objective: To strengthen the muscles in the middle of the back.

Caution: Avoid neck strain by placing the forehead on a towel and looking downward into the mat.



Neck Tips

To make your life less stressful for your neck, you might want to use this checklist:

Posture	Keep your neck straight. Avoid overhead work.
Carrying	Always divide the weight to be carried between your hands.
Sitting	Use an upright chair. Give support to your elbows or arms while working at a desk or reading a book. Have your work surface at a comfortable height. Get up and stretch every 20–30 minutes.
Standing	Have your work surface at a comfortable height.
Driving	Adjust your seat from time to time. Try a folded towel or pillow in the small of your back.
Activity	20–30 minutes walking, cycling or swimming every day. Gradually increase physical activity.
Sleeping	Give good support to your neck and head. Keep the head and neck well aligned with your trunk. Avoid sleeping on your stomach or using too many pillows.
Relax	Learn how to reduce stress. Use relaxation techniques, such as this simple breathing technique:

As you inhale, let your stomach expand:



As you exhale, let your stomach contract:



As you breathe out tell yourself to relax and release the muscle tension in your body. Take three slow and deep breaths this way before and after you exercise or when ever you feel tension. Try to practice this in a quiet place each day for 10 minutes.