

Emergency Department

Self Treatment of Acute Neck Pain



Neck pain is a common problem which has many causes. These include trauma or injury, wear and tear, altered postures or stress. For most people, no obvious reason for the onset of pain is found.

Symptoms may include:

- Pain in your neck which may radiate to your shoulder, between shoulder blades or into one or both arms.
- Tension in the muscles of your neck.
- Altered posture or difficulty moving your neck normally.
- Headache.
- Less commonly: pins and needles, numbness or weakness in one or both arms.

Recommended treatment for Acute Neck Pain:



The following can help reduce the pain:

- Pain medication. Speak to your local pharmacist or health care professional about taking regular medication.
- Heat packs.
- Change position regularly and find a position which helps relieve symptoms.
- Stay active but do not carry out activities which aggravate your symptoms.
- Complete the exercises shown hourly if you are able.
- **Research suggests that using a collar will delay your recovery.**

Exercises:

Exercise 1



Bend your head forwards until you feel a stretch on the back of your neck. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and repeat as able.

Exercise 2



Bend your head forwards until you feel a stretch on the back of your neck. Hold 5 – 10 seconds and repeat as able.

Exercise 3



Side bend your head to the right and left. Hold for 5- 10 seconds and repeat as able.

Exercise 4



Roll your shoulder backwards. repeat as able.

Exercise 5



Clasp your hands and raise your hands above your head. Repeat as able.

Advice continued:



Keeping active is an essential part of your treatment. It is important to keep your neck moving whilst you recover to prevent stiffness and help you improve faster. Long periods of inactivity can slow down your recovery.

Being physically active throughout your recovery will:

- Prevent recurrence of the problem.
- Maintain current levels of fitness.
- Keep muscles and joints flexible.

It is recommended you stay at work or return as quickly as possible during your recovery. You do not need to be pain or symptom free to return to work.

If your symptoms are not improving or you experience continued pins and needles, numbness, dizziness, visual disturbances or fever, please seek further medical advice.

Try to stay positive. Remember, most neck pain settles with time. 😊

Useful Information and Contacts:



NHS Forth Valley website has lots of useful information and contacts:

www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/know-who-to-turn-to-when-you-are-ill

GP contact details can be found at www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/local-service-finder/ or by calling NHS 24 on 111.

NHS Inform provides health information and details of services and support in your area. Call free on 0800 224488 or visit www.nhsinform.co.uk



For people with mental health or psychological problems and in crisis, support is available by phoning NHS 24 on 111, Samaritans on 116 123 or Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

The Musculoskeletal (**MSK**) Helpline is a service for people experiencing MSK disorders such as back pain or sports injuries. Phone **0800 917 9390** (9am to 5pm Mon to Fri). Calls are free.



NHS 24
Call the free national NHS helpline on 111

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