

**NHS Forth Valley  
Physiotherapy Services**

# **Neck Pain**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of two overlapping, stylized blue waves. The waves are light blue and have a soft, rounded appearance, creating a sense of movement and flow.

# Introduction

Neck pain is common. It can be caused by –

- Minor strains to the muscles or ligaments in the neck
- Poor posture
- Whiplash injury
- ‘Wear and tear’ – this is sometimes called cervical spondylosis
- Nerve irritation

## What are the common symptoms?

Pain starting in the neck may spread to the shoulders, shoulder blade and sometimes into the head. Movement of your neck may be painful and stiff. If a nerve is irritated you may get pain spreading down an arm or hand and you may feel pins and needles, numbness or weakness in part of your arm.

## Will my neck get back to normal?

The outlook is good in most cases of sudden onset neck pain. Symptoms commonly begin to improve after a few days, and are usually gone within a few weeks. However the time taken for symptoms to settle varies from person to person.

If your symptoms do not improve or get worse seek advice from your GP about referral to the physiotherapy department.

## What should I avoid?

- Avoid keeping your neck completely still and wearing a collar.
- Keeping your neck in a bent position for a long period e.g. when reading/writing/computer.
- Check your workstation position if using a computer.
- Lying in a bath for any length of time.
- Avoid sleeping on your front. Use 1 firm supportive pillow (or 2 thinner pillows). Your head should be in line with your body when lying on your side.

## What should I do to help these symptoms?

**PAINKILLERS** – Over the counter medication taken regularly can help. If your pain is well controlled this will allow you to keep active, exercise your neck and get back to normal activities quicker. If in doubt talk to your pharmacist or GP.

**POSTURE** – Good posture helps avoid putting further strain on injured or over-stretched tissues. Avoid remaining static for long periods and change your posture frequently.

**HEAT** – This may be used to ease pain and muscle spasm. A heat pad or wheat germ pack may be used over the affected area for approximately 15 minutes. Take care not to burn yourself.

**EXERCISE YOUR NECK AND KEEP ACTIVE** – Aim to keep your neck moving as normally as possible. Gently exercise your neck as soon as you are able by following the exercises suggested on page 6.

**Repeat these movements several times a day. Sit upright before starting the exercises.**

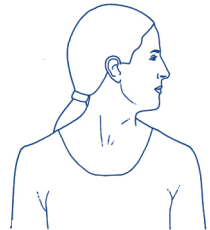
**Exercise 1:** Bend your head forward until you feel a gentle stretch behind your neck.



**Exercise 2:** Tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat to the opposite side.



**Exercise 3:** Turn your head to one side until you feel a gentle stretch. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat to the opposite side.



**If you feel you need further help and have not already been referred to a physiotherapist, contact your GP.**

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## Contact details

Physiotherapy Department

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Galite prasyti vertejo paslaugu arba gauti sita dokumenta isversta I jusu kalba kreipdamiesi I musu vertimo paslaugu biura skambindami 0845 130 1170. Sitos paslaugos yra nemokamos.

يمكنك الحصول على خدمة الترجمة الفورية أو القيام بترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى لغتك الأصلية عن طريق الإتصال بخدمات الترجمة الفورية على رقم 0845 130 1170. هذه الخدمات متاحة مجاناً بدون أى مقابل مادي.

Dzwoniąc do biura tłumaczeń pod numer 0845 130 1170 możecie Państwo prosić o tłumacza albo otrzymać ten dokument przetłumaczony na wasz język ojczysty. Powyżej wymienione usługi są darmowe.

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