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# Neck Exercises

## Pain Management Services



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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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## 5.) Sub-occipital Stretch



- Sit or stand with your back against the wall. If preferable, you can lay on your back to do this exercise, it is advisable to use a thin pillow under your head and use a firm surface.
- Nod your chin so that the back of your head slides on the wall.
- Do not arch your back and try to flatten your shoulder to the wall. Hold this position for as long as you are able up to 30 seconds.

## 6.) Nerve Mobilisation



- Stand or sit tall.
- Start with your hand at neck level and look at your hand. Move the arm out and up.
- Turn your head in the opposite direction as you move your arm and extend the wrist and fingers at the end of the movement.
- Do not execute the exercise too fast; the symptoms can arise quickly. Stop the movement at the edge of where your symptoms are reproduced.
- Do as many repetitions as you are able up to a count of 10.

## Neck Exercises

The following exercises are to help maintain a range of neck movements and improve muscle tone. They will stretch out tight muscles and ligaments and reduce stiffness of neck joints. They may help to reduce your neck pain if kept up on a regular basis.

They need only be done a few times per day preferably at regular intervals. Start these exercises by doing only 1-2 repetitions at a time and gradually increase repetitions up to 15 as you are able. Find a level that is right for you.

Whilst doing these exercises aim to keep good posture of your neck and shoulders. If necessary look at yourself in a mirror to assess this. Avoid round shoulders and forward “poking chin” and do not slump.

Never force the neck movements or bounce the movement at the end of the range. Only do the **progressions** on each of the exercises if you have managed the first stage with no adverse effects.

If your neck is particularly painful, some form of warmth (hot water bottle wrapped in a towel, wheat bag, heat pad etc.) will help to relax tense muscles before exercising.

### 1.) Active Range of Movement Flexion



- Stand or sit tall.
- Keeping your chin tucked in, slowly bend chin towards chest to stretch out the muscles and ligaments at the back of your neck.
- Relax into this position for 10-20 seconds before lifting your head back to a neutral position.
- **Progression** – to increase the stretch place your hands on the back of your head and gently pull your head further forwards.

### 2.) Active Range of Movement Rotation



- Stand, sit or lay on your back with a pillow under your head.
- Turn your head so as to bring your chin towards your shoulder until you feel a stretch on the opposite side of your neck.
- Hold this position for 10-20 seconds before returning your head to the midline.
- Repeat in the opposite direction.
- **Progression** – To increase the stretch put your hand on your cheek and gently pull your head further round.

### 3.) Active Range of Movement Side Bending



- Stand or sit tall.
- Without turning your head, slowly tilt your head sideways to bring ear to shoulder.
- Hold this position for 10-20 seconds before returning your head to the midline.
- Repeat in the opposite direction.
- **Progression** – To increase the stretch put your hand over your head and place it above your ear and pull your head further sideways.

### 4.) Shoulder Elevation



- Stand or sit tall.
- Take a deep breath in, shrug your shoulders up to your ears as hard as you can. Hold to a count of 5.
- Breathe out and relax your shoulders.
- Repeat as many times as you require up to 15.