

Neck Pain

Neck pain, or cervicalgia, is when the back of your neck and/or your upper back ache. It can be caused by bad posture, muscle strain, problems with the spine or anxiety and stress.

When you have pain in your neck, avoid painful movements, apply heat to the area several times a day, being careful not to burn yourself, and take any medication that your doctor prescribes. Anti-inflammatory creams may help. Wearing a soft cervical collar for short periods may also relieve the pain.

Stretching and gentle exercises may be helpful, but always avoid making any movement that hurts.

Avoid bed rest, painful movements and straining, lifting heavy weights and wearing an orthopaedic collar for too many hours or longer than a week.

How can you prevent cervical pain?

- Keep your muscles flexible and strong, especially those in your back, by doing regular exercise.
- Do stretches before and after physical exercise, working on the computer or sitting in the same position for long periods.
- Make sure you sit in the right position at work and in front of the computer.
- Avoid falling asleep on the sofa or when reading in bed with your head in the wrong position.
- Sleep with a pillow that supports your neck properly, or else without a pillow.

Exercises

● Tilt your head gently over to one side, leading with your ear towards your shoulder. Then return to centre and repeat on the opposite side.



● Tilt your head gently up and down, as if nodding but without moving it backwards.



● Turn your head to one side and then the other as if saying no.



When should you worry?

- If the pain or numbness spreads down your arm.
- If the pain is triggered by a blow or an accident.
- If the pain is intense and wakes you up at night.
- If the pain persists longer than 2 weeks.
- If other symptoms appear, like a fever or vomiting.