

Small everyday actions that help keep your joints moving well and release your neck muscle tension. This is a great way to help to keep things working well in between your treatments, and therefore make your spine function better in general. We will discuss posture and ergonomics, but firstly, we will go through a few key neck stretches.

Neck Stretches

These are simple to do and will help to relieve your muscular tightness and can help you avoid headaches. Do them regularly (every day) and when you feel a headache coming on. The upper trapezius muscles are the ones that you feel at the tops of your shoulders, going up into the neck. When these muscles are tight they can often contribute to headaches felt up and over the head and behind the eyes. To stretch the upper trapezius muscles, begin by standing (or sitting) tall with your shoulders straight, then bring your right ear down to your right shoulder so that your head is tilted, and use your right hand to very gently pull down the head to increase the stretch. Repeat on the left side to keep it even. This is best held for 20-30 seconds.

The small suboccipital muscles are at the back and top of the neck. They go from the top of the neck to the base of the skull and when tight can cause headaches to be felt in that same area or across the forehead. To stretch the suboccipital muscles keep your shoulders and back straight (as always!) and tuck your chin down to give yourself a double chin. Then use your hands to gently pull to increase the stretch.

Ergonomics

Check that your desk is set up in an ergonomically correct position, and that everything you need to reach is within arm's length. Speak to your chiropractor for more details or take a photo of yourself sitting at your desk in with you to your chiropractic treatment to ask for individual detailed advice.

I hope you have found these tips useful to help control your neck pain and headaches. Please ask your chiropractor if you are ready to do these stretches at home or if you have any questions regarding your individual treatment for your neck pain and headaches.

Posture

Improving your posture is vital when you suffer from neck pain and headaches. Simply put, if you are constantly putting your spine in awkward positions then how can you expect the joints and muscles to function normally?

Useful Self-Help Tips for Neck Pain & Headaches, That you Can do at Home



An example of an Upper Trapezius stretch



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Awkward postures/positions and how to fix them are detailed here...

Problem – Lying on your side on the sofa.

Fix – Sit straight on the sofa, with cushions behind you so your back is straight and with both feet flat on the floor. The TV should be directly in front of you so you don't need to turn your head.

Problem – Sleeping with the incorrect number of pillows (or even worse, on your front).

Fix – Sleep on your back with one pillow or on your side with two. Speak to your chiropractor for more details as this is a whole topic in itself!

Problem – Holding the phone between your shoulder and your ear for prolonged periods of time.

Fix – Avoid this completely.

Problem – Reading with your head tilted downwards towards your book/phone.

Fix – Bring your book or phone up towards your face, not the other way around. Support your arms with an arm rest or your opposite arm to help.

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