

## Exercises for your neck

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If you have neck pain and stiffness, a course of exercises to strengthen the muscles that control the movements of the neck is important. There are 35 joints on all in the neck. If there is any problem or pain with a particular exercise, you should stop doing it.

**Please note that there are 6 ways your neck can move. They are**

1. Forward bending (looking at your toes)
2. Backward bending (looking at the ceiling above your head)
3. Turning to the right.
4. Turning to the left.
5. Bending to the right
6. Bending to the left.

**You need to do some isometric exercises in all these directions to improve the strength of the muscles. It is important that you do not move your head or neck but just resist these movements.**

**Exercise 1: Resisted Forward bending.** Cup both your hands and hold it under your chin. Push your chin and head into the cupped hands whilst the hands are pushing upwards. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

**Exercise 2: Resisted Backward bending.** Intertwine your fingers together and hold your hands behind your head. Push your head into the palm of your hands whilst the arms are pushing forwards. You don't need to move. Just increase the pressure. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

**Exercise 3: Resisted Side Bending – Left.** Place the palm of your left hand into the side of your head above your left ear. Now try to bend your neck to the left. Now resist and counter this bending with your hand. Again please note that you don't need to move. You just need to increase the pressure. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

**Exercise 4: Resisted Side Bending – Right.** Place the palm of your right hand into the side of your head above your right ear. Now try to bend your neck to the right. Now resist and counter this bending with your hand. Again please note that you don't need to move. You just need to increase the pressure. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

**Exercise 5: Resisted rotation - Left** Place the palm of your left hand on your left cheek. Now try turning your head to left. Resist and counter this turning with the palm of your hand pushing your cheek towards the right. Again please note that you don't need to move. You just need to increase the pressure. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

**Exercise 6: Resisted rotation - Right** Place the palm of your right hand on your right cheek. Now try turning your head to right. Resist and counter this turning with the palm of your hand pushing your cheek towards the left. Again please note that you don't need to move. You just need to increase the pressure. Count from 1 to 10 and then release.

Repeat these exercises 3 times. Try to do three sets of these exercises every hour that you are awake. Initially only use mild pressure. Slowly over a period of days and weeks you can increase the pressure.

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