



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Looking After Your Neck Injury

Most acute neck injuries are not serious, and the pain will improve over time. It is important to maintain good positioning and active range of movement of the neck following an injury. Poor posture and failure to mobilise can result in prolonged discomfort and restriction of movement.

Neck Exercises:

These exercises will be painful initially but will not harm your neck. Try and repeat these movements at least 10 times an hour. Each day stretch the neck a little further.

Posture

Bad posture delays recovery. When sitting, standing, reading, or driving do not slouch forwards with your chin sticking out and your shoulder hunched over. Straighten your back, relax your shoulder and tuck in your chin.

Chin tucks

Straighten your back, stretch your shoulder downwards and draw your head backwards on your neck.

Look straight ahead, not down at your feet. Keep your chin level with the floor. Do this 10 times an hour.

Moving your neck

Straighten up and look ahead. Try to touch your ear down to your shoulder. Repeat with the other side

Now straighten up again, and then look round over each shoulder in turn. Keep the nose pointing straight.

Finally, straighten up and look upwards pointing your chin to the ceiling. Then look down putting your chin on your chest.

Sleeping

Do not use too many pillows in bed. Feather or polyester pillows are better than foam as they can be moulded to the shape of your neck. Use a rolled-up hand towel inside the bottom edge of the pillowcase. Try not to sleep on your face.

Relieving discomfort

The pain in your neck will gradually settle as the movement returns. Applying gentle heat often helps. Try a hot water bottle, heated towel, heat lamp or warming liniment. You can take over the counter painkillers such as: paracetamol, ibuprofen or co-codamol as recommended on the packages.

In most cases, with the above measures, the discomfort should be markedly improved within two to three days. If within one week substantial improvements have not been made, please contact your GP or consider self-referral to Physiotherapy (www.yourphysio.org.uk) for further treatment.

① If you have further concerns about your condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/when-to-use-nhs-111)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services. PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk. An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats: If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

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