

TAKING CARE OF YOUR NECK

CORRECT WAY TO LIFT

- Stand up straight, close to the object.
- Bend at your hips and knees.
- Firmly grasp the object and rise up with your hip and leg muscles.
- Keep the object close to your body.
- The feet should be positioned shoulder-width apart.
- You may find placing one foot forward and the other back makes it easier to lift an object in the “squatting” position.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF NECK PAIN AND HEADACHES

- Poor posture** ▶ One of the most common causes of neck pain; the basic rule is simple: keep your neck in a “neutral” position whenever possible.
- Your sleeping position** ▶ Feather pillows conform easily to the shape of your neck. Try doing some exercises before bed and first thing in the morning.
- Neck position** ▶ Adjust your desk, monitor, and chair to a comfortable height. Adjust your car seat close enough to the pedals so you don’t have to extend your neck.
- TMJ** ▶ The joint which the jaw is hinged to the skull; can cause neck pain
- Headaches** ▶ Can originate in neck or jaw, may be misdiagnosed as migraines

A PHYSICAL THERAPIST’S PERSPECTIVE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- YOUR HEAD AND NECK REGION IS VULNERABLE TO MANY DIFFERENT STRESSES.
- PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP RECOVER FUNCTION QUICKLY AND TEACH YOU NEW HABITS TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF FURTHER PAIN OR INJURY.

ANATOMY OF NECK REGION:

- ONE OF THE MOST FLEXIBLE REGIONS OF THE SPINE IS THE NECK.
- THE UPPERMOST CERVICAL DISC CONNECTS THE TOP OF THE SPINAL COLUMN TO THE BASE OF THE SKULL.
- THE SPINAL CORD RUNS THROUGH A CANAL IN THE CERVICAL VERTEBRAE.



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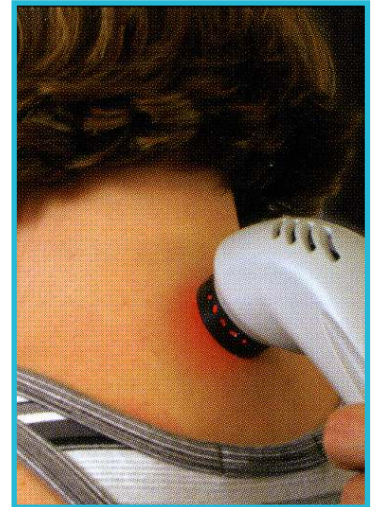
Possible causes of neck pain and headaches continued...

Osteoarthritis

- Inflammation of the joints caused by wear and tear
- Characterized by stiffness and limited range of motion
- Exercise, stretching, massage, and other techniques can gently and slowly help the patient

Whiplash

- A violent back-and-forth motion of the neck
- Most common traumatic injury to the neck region
- A device known as a cervical collar may be appropriate in order to “rest” the neck and calm the inflammation



HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP

DETAILED HISTORY & EVALUATION

- YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT YOUR AGE, HEALTH, OCCUPATION, AND LIFESTYLE
- YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST WILL WORK WITH YOU IN CONSULTATION WITH A PHYSICIAN IF NEEDED

AFTER DIAGNOSIS

- EXERCISES FOR FLEXIBILITY, STRENGTH, STABILITY, AND RESTORATION OF RANGE OF MOTION
- ICE, HEAT, ELECTRICAL STIMULATION, TRACTION/ MOBILIZATION AND MASSAGE
- ANALYZE WORK AND HOME ENVIRONMENT

MUCH EVIDENCE SHOWS:

- SWIMMING, WALKING, LOW-IMPACT AEROBICS, AND STATIONARY BICYCLING MAY ALSO BE HELPFUL.
- GOAL OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IS TO RETURN YOU TO NORMAL ACTIVITY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.



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