

5 Exercises to Improve Neck Pain

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1. Chin Tucks

1. Make an “L” with your thumb and index finger.
2. Turn your hand so your thumb is pointing towards your chest.
3. Place your thumb on the notch at the top of your breastbone.
4. Bring your chin forward so it's touching your index finger (if it's not already).
5. Pull your chin away from your index finger. (I tell people "Pretend someone is kissing you and you don't want them to." That way we pull the chin away, rather than lifting the head up or nodding the chin down too much).
6. Hold for 5 seconds.
7. Return your chin to starting position.
8. Repeat steps 4-7 10 times.
9. Rest for 30 seconds after you've completed 10 repetitions.
10. Perform 3 sets of 10 total.



2. Upper Trapezius (“Upper Trap”) Stretch

1. Sit towards the front of a chair with back straight and feet flat on the floor.
2. Grab the bottom of the chair with your left hand.
3. Lean your head towards your right shoulder (make sure you don’t bring your right shoulder up. Let the head come to the shoulder, not the other way around).
4. You should feel a stretch in your upper shoulder/neck on the left side.
5. Hold for 60 seconds, breathing. (If you can't hold for 60 seconds, do two sets of 30 seconds, or whatever your body will allow right now).
6. Repeat on the other side.



3. Levator Scapulae Stretch

1. Sit towards the front of a chair with back straight and feet flat on the floor.
2. Grab the bottom of the chair with your left hand.
3. Lean your head towards your right shoulder (make sure you don’t bring your right shoulder up. Let the head come to the shoulder, not the other way around).
4. Turn your nose towards your right armpit.
5. You should feel a stretch deep in your upper shoulder/neck on the left side.
6. Hold for 60 seconds, breathing. (If you can't hold for 60 seconds, do two sets of 30 seconds, or whatever your body will allow right now).
7. Repeat on the other side.



4. Scapular Retractions

1. Sit up tall, with feet on the floor, or stand with feet hip distance apart.
2. Allow your arms to rest down by your sides, palms facing your thighs.
3. Move your shoulder blades together in the back (think about your chest getting wider in the front with this movement).
4. Hold for three seconds.
5. Relax.
6. Repeat steps 1-4 for 8-10 reps.
7. Take a 30 second rest.
8. Perform 3 sets total.



****Note:** Many people try to complete this exercise by moving their arms, rather than their shoulder blades. While your arms will move slightly, try not to make the movement bigger with your arms. This whole exercise is about small, but effective movement. ******

5. Thoracic Spine Rotation

Sit up tall, towards the edge of the chair, with your feet flat on the floor.

1. Place your hands on your shoulders.
2. Rotate your ribs towards your right side (think of yourself as a spiral staircase. You get taller as you rotate).
3. As you rotate, make sure both bum cheeks are still in contact with the chair.
4. Hold this position for three deep breaths.
5. Rotate back towards center.
6. Repeat on the right three times.
7. Complete on the left three times.



****Note:** It's very normal for one side to move more easily than the other. Once again, don't try to force anything. ******