



How can I help the pain?

- A warm bath or placing a hot-pack or warm hot water bottle in a towel over your neck will help to relax your muscles. Ask your therapists for more advice
- Gentle massage over your neck and shoulder muscles may help.
- Get someone to stroke the muscles either side of your neck and continue over the tops of your shoulders. If unsure, get your physiotherapist to teach you some simple techniques
- It is important to keep your neck moving with gentle exercises.
- If you have been given a neck collar to use, remember to take it off for short periods to move your neck and prevent stiffness and muscles getting weak.
- Try to get a good nights sleep - ask the therapist for a sleep leaflet

For more information ...

Websites

www.sleepcouncil.org.uk

www.backpain.org.uk

Department of Rheumatology

Physiotherapy 0121 333 8221

Occupational Therapist 0121 333 8212

Data Protection

We collect information about our young people and families relevant to their diagnosis and treatment. We store it in written records and on computer. We may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the Adolescent Rheumatology team or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on (0121) 333 8403/8611.



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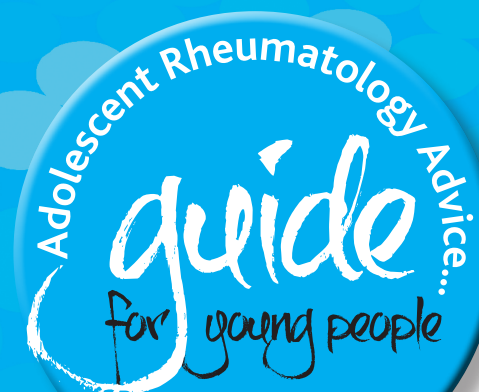
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Pain in the neck



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My Neck Hurts !

Neck pain and stiffness can be caused by, or made worse by:

- Poor posture, particularly when spending long periods hunched over a computer or desk
- A bed that is either too hard or too soft for you, or pillows which are too thick or thin
- Carrying heavy bags particularly on one shoulder
- Using the wrong sized furniture
- Uncontrolled arthritis

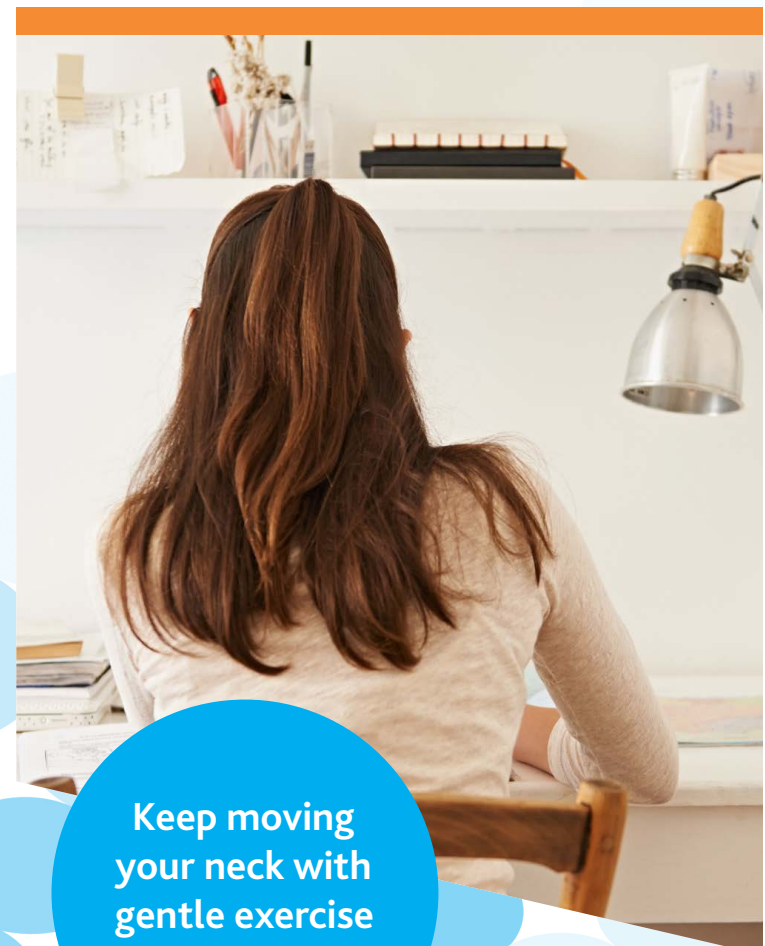
Stress can also make neck pain worse. If you are under pressure or worried, this can cause tension in the neck muscles leading to pain. Poor quality sleep can also do this.



Tips for looking after your neck

When writing or using the computer, make sure you're sitting in a good position and that your chair and desk is the right height for you

- Don't hold your neck in one position for too long, particularly if working at your desk or computer. Try to sit up straight and stretch your neck every 15 minutes or so
- Try to angle your work when reading or use a book rest
- When writing, try to rest your work on a lever arch file to tilt it slightly
- At school try to sit facing the board so you're not twisting your neck
- Try to carry your books in a rucksack with straps on both shoulders
- If it's very cold outside, wear a scarf
- Make sure your bed is right for you — not too hard or too soft. Instead it should support your body. Your pillows should keep your head in a neutral position i.e. they don't push it too far forward when lying on your back and when on your side your spine and neck should be in a straight line
- If your neck is very painful, avoid activities which jolt it e.g. fast fairground rides, jumping, jogging and gymnastics
- Exercise your neck regularly throughout the day to stop it getting stiff. Try looking up and down 5 times, then turn side to side 5 times. Don't ever be tempted to stretch your neck hard using your hand.



Keep moving
your neck with
gentle exercise

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