



**Blackpool Teaching
Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

Neck Pain

**Information for patients and
those close to them**

Emergency Department



Neck injury:

Following an injury to the neck you may have some or all of the following symptoms:

- Pain in the neck, which may radiate into the shoulder area.
- Stiffness on turning.
- Headaches.

In order to aid the healing process and to ensure your discomfort is short lived the following points are important:

- Maintain a good posture at all times.
- Exercise your neck and shoulders, to keep the joints mobile and muscles strong.

It is important you take any pain relieving medication prescribed by your doctor in this acute stage, to allow you to perform gentle movements and aid recovery.

All the advice in this leaflet is suitable for patients who have sustained a whiplash injury.

NB. If you feel the exercises are making your pain worse **STOP DOING THEM AND SEEK ADVICE FROM YOUR GP.**

Recommended exercises:

Below are some exercises recommended by physiotherapists to help relieve your symptoms.

Initially it may be more comfortable to perform the exercises lying on your back with your head supported. When able commence the exercises in a sitting position.

Use slow, smooth movements whilst performing the exercises. You may feel some discomfort but you should not 'go through the pain barrier'.

The following exercises should be done 4-5 times a day, and on each occasion every exercise should be repeated 5 times.



Pull your chin in. At the end position take hold of your chin and carefully push it backwards. Hold for a moment and feel the stretch in your neck.



Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold for 5-10 seconds, and then repeat to the other side.



Tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel a stretch on the opposite side. Hold for 5-10 seconds, and then repeat to the other side.



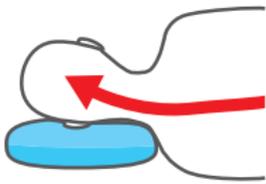
Sit or stand. Roll your shoulders in both directions.

Sleeping posture:

Always sleep on a firm bed either on your back or on your side. Do not sleep face down. If you sleep on your side, there are two points to remember:

1. Ensure that your head and neck are straight, i.e. in line with the rest of the spine, as in figure 1 below. The number of pillows can vary, depending on their thickness and firmness, but should be the right number to keep the head straight.
2. The arm on which you are lying should be kept in front of the chest, not under or behind it.

 Normal Pillow



 Healthy Pillow

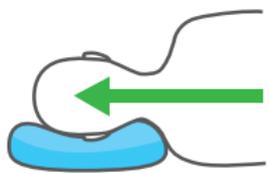
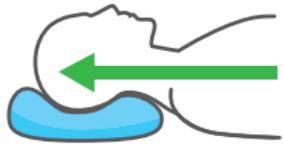


Fig 1. Good sleeping posture

Other useful advice:

Neck injuries are very common and can be caused by seemingly minimal trauma. Pain is commonly worse the day after injury, but this pain and stiffness should gradually wear off.

Following the correct advice for your injury in the early stages will ensure that it settles as quickly as possible and prevents future neck problems. The worst thing you can do is nothing, this will make things worse rather than better!

A full recovery is expected and complications are rare, however consult your doctor if you feel your symptoms are worsening.

Useful contact details

Hospital Switchboard: 01253 300000

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offers impartial advice and deals with any concern or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via: Tel: **01253 955589** or by email: **patient.relations@bfwh.nhs.uk**

You can also write to us at: **Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:
Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator 01253 953397

Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call: **01253 955588**

Our Four Values:



People Centred
Compassion

Positive
Excellence

NHS
Blackpool Teaching
Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Approved by: **Unscheduled Care**
Date of Publication: **17/04/2018**
Reference No: **PL/773 V3**
Author: **A&E Department**
Review Date: **01/04/2021**

