

PREVENTING NECK PAIN

As the neck is so mobile and balances a heavy head on top of it, it can be easily strained. The most common causes of neck pain include:

Injury, resulting from motor vehicle, sports or occupational accidents. Examples include 'whiplash' and muscle strains.

Postural problems, such as slouching your shoulders, sleeping with your head in an awkward position, or working with your head in an awkward position (most commonly down) for long periods.

Below is some useful advice to help you control and prevent neck pain:

POSTURE

- Think tall, chest lifted, shoulders relaxed, chin tucked in and head level.
- Posture should be stable, balanced and relaxed.

SLEEPING

- If you are a side sleeper, a pillow with adequate support is important, and a contour to support under the neck is advised.
- If you are a back sleeper, a small pillow is recommended to focus the support under your neck area as feels comfortable.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach.

RELAXATION

- Recognise when you are tense. You may be hunching your shoulders or clenching your teeth without realising it.
- Only when we are aware of tension can we work to release it. Mindfulness meditation can help.

WORK

- Avoid working with your head down or to one side for long periods. Frequently stretch and change position.



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HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

A physio will be able to determine the source of your neck pain and treat it.

They may use:

- Mobilisation.
- Manipulation.
- Functional and rehabilitative exercises.
- Encouraging normal activity.
- Postural assessment, correction and advice.
- Laser, ultrasound, electrotherapy and heat treatment.
- Advice regarding work role modifications, if required.
- Massage.

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