

you repeat the exercise you must move to the edge of the pain and then release the pressure. The pain should disappear entirely over a period of two to three weeks. Each session of exercises 6 and 7 should always be concluded with a few repetitions of exercises 1 and 2.

If you feel stiffness only on these movements, you should do the same exercises but apply overpressure with your hands at the end of each movement. By exercising in this way you achieve movement to the maximum possible degree. In a period of three to six weeks you should be able to restore normal function.

Once you are completely symptom free, you should follow the guidelines given to prevent recurrence of neck problems. Now you should continue with the exercise programme as outlined for when you have no pain or stiffness.

WHEN YOU HAVE NO PAIN OR STIFFNESS

Many people with neck problems have lengthy spells in which they experience little or no pain. If, in the past or recently, you have had one or more episodes of neck pain, you should start the exercise programme even though you may be pain free at the moment. However, in this situation it is not necessary to do all the exercises and to exercise every two hours.

To prevent recurrence of neck problems you should perform exercise 6, followed by exercises 1 and 2 on a regular basis, preferably in the morning and at night. Furthermore, whenever you feel minor strain developing during work or while sitting, you should apply exercises 1 and 2. It is even more important that you watch your posture at all times and never again let postural stresses be the cause of neck pain. These exercises will have very little or no effect, if you constantly fall back into poor posture. It may be necessary to exercise in the manner described above for the rest of your life, but it is essential and imperative that you develop and maintain good postural habits.

As it takes only one minute to perform one session of exercise 6 and another minute to combine exercises 1 and 2 and repeat them ten times, lack of time should never be used as an excuse for not being able to do these exercises.

RECURRENCE

At the first sign of recurrence of neck pain you should immediately perform exercises 1 and 2. If your pain is already too severe to tolerate these exercises or if they fail to reduce the pain, you must quickly introduce exercises 3 and 4. If you have one-sided symptoms which do not centralise with any of these exercises, you should start with exercise 5. Again, you must pay extra attention to your posture, regularly perform postural correction and maintain the correct posture as much as you can.

WHEN YOU HAVE HEADACHES

Headaches can often be relieved by some of the recommended exercises, usually exercises 1 and 7. It will not do any harm to perform these exercises for a couple of days in order to find out whether you benefit from them or not. The first three days you should perform exercise 1 — head retraction — at regular intervals and whenever you feel a headache is developing. If this reduces your headaches but does not abolish them completely, you should add exercise 7. In particular the headaches which spread over the top of your head to above or behind the eyes are often relieved with this exercise. You may even be able to prevent the development of such headaches by performing this exercise as soon as you feel minor strain building up.

In case your headaches are not relieved by these two exercises, you should for the next three days do exercise 4 — neck extension in lying — followed by exercises 1 and 2 and postural correction. As your symptoms are improving you may gradually stop exercise 4 but you must continue with the other two exercises.

If you are unable to influence your headaches with any of the exercises or if your headaches become much worse during exercising and remain worse over the next day, you should stop exercising and seek advice.