

Careful clinical examination, Laboratory investigations, imaging modalities (X-ray, MRI, CT Scan, Isotope Bone Scan), and if needed tissue diagnosis by core biopsy or open biopsy would confirm the diagnosis in most of the cases.

Treatment :

Acute neck pain is generally relieved by simple bed rest (i.e. gravity elimination, stoppage of movement, with properly adjusted pillow), local heat, anti inflammatory and/ or muscle relaxant drugs. some patients may need reassurance, sympathetic handling, antianxiety drugs. Once acute pain and spasm is reduced, patients can resume their activities gradually, some may need the support of a collar for short periods. This is followed by a programme directed towards normal painless function of the neck in a comprehensive direction. The ensuing stiffness of joints and tightness of soft structures is improved by cervical traction, stretching and mobilising exercises. Traction is generally useful in younger age groups. The muscular strength and endurance are improved by graded exercises. If pain persists beyond 3 - 4 weeks or recurs or if there is lack of correlation between clinical features and investigative findings then pain is chronic and needs sophisticated investigative to know the exact pathology and its location followed by the appropriate treatment.

Basic Exercises for Neck Pain



Rotation of the Head



Lateral Flexion of the Neck



Flexion & Extension of the Neck

Prevention and Care of Neck Pain

Squatting and sitting on the floor

Keep Back gently straight, use support while raising or lowering yourself. On sitting, the low back must be supported. Avoid bucket shaped chairs, oversoft chairs, stools. Make sure the height of chairs is right in relation to the desk or working surface so that shoulders are not pulled up or drooping for long periods of time. Reading stands or sloping desks may be useful. Visual defects should be corrected. Avoid keeping neck in any one fixed posture for long.

Working Heights:

Avoid bending, stretching or shrugging unnecessarily. If working on floor. Don't bend over items on the floor.

Walking

Walk tall. Keep back straight, flat, keeping shoulders reasonably far back, chest forward and tummy in. Avoid sudden movements.

Bed and Pillow

Use firm, non sagging bed / mattress. Very hard bed without mattress is likely to give pressure pain at various points. The neck should be in neutral stance rather than tilted to any side.

If sleeping on sides then one can use a thicker pillow to avoid tilting head to one side. The pillow must support the mandible (Jaw bone) which would stop rotational movements. Don't sleep without pillow. Use a firm thickness mattress when sleeping on the back. The pillow must be sufficiently caudal to support neck shoulder junction, so that no part of the spine remains unsupported. Avoid sleeping prone for long duration since it requires keeping neck in a tilted position for long. Cervical pillows available commercially suit only a few people. Majority adjust pillow usage by trial and error.

Driving

Ride short distances. Avoid jerks, Adjust seat to sit with back gently straight and supported and legs not too extended.

EASY NECK PAIN EXERCISES

