

OrthoBethesda Therapy Services

Home Exercise Program for Mechanical Neck Pain

1. Head Retraction (seated):

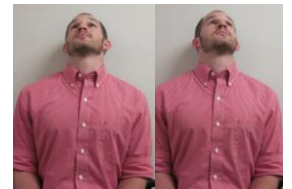
- Sit tall, on a chair or stool.
- Look straight ahead and allow your head and neck to fully relax.
 - This will cause your head to project forward slightly.
- To begin the exercise, slowly pull your head backwards as far as possible without tilting your neck up or down.
 - Your head should remain perpendicular to the floor throughout the exercise.
 - This can be accomplished by “tucking” your chin back.
- Hold this end-position for at least 2-3 seconds, then begin to relax and allow your head to project forward naturally. (*Do not protrude fully.*)
- Repeat this exercise for a total of 10 repetitions, performed 6 to 8 times daily.
 - Attempt to pull your head backwards as far as possible with each repetition.



- Once you are comfortable performing the exercise as described above, you may increase its effectiveness by using two fingers to push your chin back even further with each repetition.

2. Neck Extension (seated):

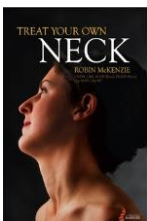
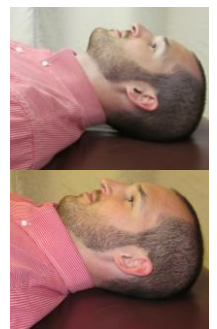
- Sit tall, on a chair or stool.
- Retract your head backwards as described in Exercise 1.
- Keeping your head retracted, tilt your head backwards so you are looking up.
- Once you have tilted back as much as possible, rotate your head side to side so that your nose moves only about ½ inch (2 cm) to each side. As you rotate, attempt to tilt your head and neck back even more.
- After at least 2-3 seconds, return your head and neck to the starting position.
- Repeat this exercise for a total of 10 repetitions, performed 6 to 8 times daily.
 - Attempt to pull your head backwards as far as possible with each repetition.



If the above exercises create too much pain, you should initially perform the exercise below, with the goal of eventually performing Exercises 1 and 2:

3. Head Retraction (lying on your back):

- Lie on your back with your shoulders and head resting flat on the bed.
 - Do not use a pillow.
- To begin the exercise, push the back of your head into the mattress while pulling your chin down toward the bed.
 - Your head should remain horizontal throughout the exercise and your neck should not tilt up or down.
- Hold this end-position for at least 2-3 seconds, then begin to relax and allow your head to return to the starting position.
- Repeat this exercise for a total of 10 repetitions, performed 6 to 8 times daily.
 - Attempt to pull your head backwards as far as possible with each repetition.



It is recommended that you purchase a copy of “Treat Your Own Neck” by Robin McKenzie. This book includes the above-mentioned exercises as well as other exercises, and is very helpful for understanding the cause and treatment of neck pain. “Treat Your Own Neck” can be purchased online from numerous distributors including OPTP.com and Amazon.com for \$10-12 plus shipping.