

## Whiplash information sheet



**Neck Flexion:** This is the movement of bringing the head forward so that the chin hits the chest and your face is staring straight down at the floor. Do slowly five times. This exercise stretches the structures at the back of the cervical spine, which are often kept in a tight position in normal day to day postures. They can then become shortened and stop the neck moving naturally.

When your head is down, you can progress the stretch by turning head slowly to the left and right to target the sides of the neck.

To obtain a further stretch you can retract the neck slightly to start with and then flex the head forward, increasing the stretch on the neck.



**Neck Extension:** This is the movement of allowing the head to go back until the face is looking directly at the ceiling. Don't do this movement fast or forcefully as it forces all the small joints at the back of the neck into an extreme position. This won't do them any harm but might increase your pain.

Allow your neck to ease back steadily as you do this, leaving your neck at the end of the movement for a few seconds.

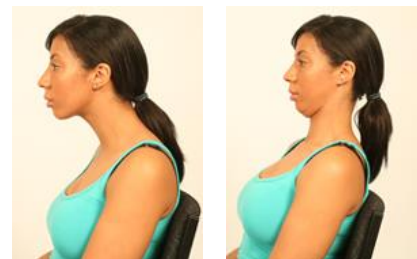
**NB** If you feel dizzy when you do this leave it out. Dizziness, especially if you are older, might indicate that the blood vessels in your neck are being squeezed by the position.

**Rotation:** Turn your head slowly round to one side until it cannot easily go any further. Once you have done five to one side do the other. Do not go from one side to the other in the individual movements or roll your neck about.

Hold your neck at the end of the movement for a few seconds as this is the most valuable part of the movement to maintain or increase your movement.

**Side Flexion:** Keep your head facing straight forward and try and tip your ear down towards the same shoulder. It's difficult to do this well and without rotating to one side. She's doing pretty well in the picture, just lifting her chin up a little more than ideal.

This movement is quite severe on the neck joints so don't go hard at the exercise. Don't move from side to side in the movement as that stops you getting to the ends of the neck range and may aggravate your joints.



**Neck retraction / protraction:** This is one of the most useful neck movements as it counteracts the tendency we all have of allowing our heads to poke forwards in a poor posture. She's showing the extreme position of "poking chin" here. When we sit, which many of us do a lot of the time, we tend to slump and to keep our heads up so our eyes are horizontal we arch our necks backwards slightly. This gives a continual flexion (bending) posture to the lower neck and an extension (arching) posture to the upper neck. Over time the tissues can shorten and give us stiffness and pain. Typical pains are in the neck, upper shoulders, but this posture can also give you headaches.

Here's the end point of the movement. Keep your face straight on during the whole movement, drawing the head back and the chin down slightly.