

## YOUR RECOVERY

You have recently experienced a neck sprain . It is normal to experience pain and stiffness. You should begin to improve after about 2 weeks., however, full recovery can take months in some people.

If you continue to have severe neck pain or develop numbness, pins & needles or loss of power in your limbs, return to your GP.

## POSTURE

Good posture is vital to help recovery.

### When sitting:

Avoid sitting slouched as this will make your chin stick out and further strain your neck. A rolled up towel behind your back at waist level will help you do this.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER— STRAIGHTEN UP!



If you sit for long periods at work, at home or in the car, get up frequently or stop the car and exercise your neck



### When lying:

Sleep on your side or on your back whichever is most comfortable.

Use one pillow if you sleep on your back, you may need 2 if on your side.

A rolled up towel placed inside your pillow-case may also help to support your neck.



## EXERCISES

Remember, early return to usual; activity will help prevent disability e.g. Walking, swimming or your usual sport.

Getting your movement back is very important.

The following exercises should be done soon after getting out of bed and then every 2 hours.

Each movement should be repeated 10 times at each session. You may feel some initial discomfort but this is to be expected and will not cause any harm.

Try to move a little further every day.



### I. Turning your head

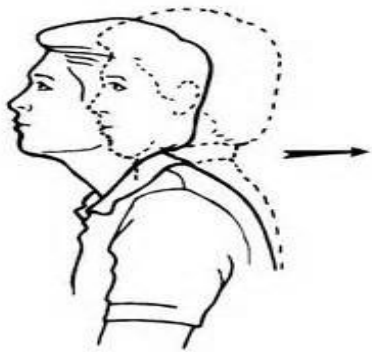
Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Repeat to the other side.



## 2. SIDE BENDING

Tilt your head toward one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side. Repeat to the opposite side

After 5 days, it is very important to start this new exercise



## 3. TUCKING IN YOUR CHIN

Pull your neck in, keeping your neck and back straight (not tipping the head forwards).. You should feel a stretch at the back of your neck. If you are suffering from

## PAIN RELIEF

The use of ice (especially in the early days), or heat will help to relieve stiffness.

### ICE:

Apply a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel to your neck

### HEAT:

Apply a covered hot water bottle to your neck.

Heat or ice can be applied for 15-20 minutes at a time, as often as required.

### COLLARS:

The use of a collar may cause poor posture, increase your stiffness and delay recovery.

For further information contact:

Physiotherapy Department at:

The Arches Health Centre  
Westminster Avenue North  
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TEL: (028) 95044010



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

## PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE

### RECOVERY FROM NECK SPRAIN FOLLOWING A ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION



The information contained in this leaflet is based on up to date research, which has shown that early return to usual activity, despite pain, is not harmful and will help to prevent disability.

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Whiplash Associated Disorder guidelines and NICE guidelines