

SPINE HEALTH NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2011

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: HEATH GALLENTINE, DC

WHAT IS CAUSING MY NECK PAIN?

Most episodes of neck pain are due to a muscle strain or other soft tissue sprain. This type of injury can also be caused by a sudden force (whiplash). Patients might complain of having a stiff neck. Neck pain often improves with time and with non-surgical care such as medications, chiropractic manipulation and specific neck exercises. If the neck pain continues or worsens or is accompanied by arm pain or numbness, there may be a specific condition that also requires treatment.

STIFF NECK CAUSES, SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENTS

By far the most common cause of a stiff neck is a muscle sprain or muscle strain, particularly to the levator scapula muscle. Located at the back and side of the neck, the levator scapula muscle connects the cervical spine (the neck) with the shoulder. This muscle is controlled by the third and fourth cervical nerves (C3, C4). The levator scapula muscle may be strained or sprained throughout the course of many common, everyday activities, such as:

- Sleeping in a position that strains the neck muscles

- Sports injuries that strain the neck



- Any activity that involves repeatedly turning the head from side to side, such as swimming the front crawl stroke
- Poor posture, such as slouching while viewing the computer monitor

ABOUT DR. GALLENTINE

Visit Dr. Gallentine's profile on Spine-Health.com to learn about his latest treatments and his special offers for new and returning patients.

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- Excessive stress, which can lead to tension in the neck
- Holding the neck in an abnormal position for a long period, such as cradling a phone between the neck and shoulder.

Read more about stiff neck causes, symptoms and treatments:

<http://www.spine-health.com/conditions/neck-pain/stiff-neck-causes-symptoms-and-treatment>

WHAT CONDITION IS CAUSING MY NECK PAIN?

While neck pain (in the cervical spine) is less common than lower back pain (in the lumbar spine), millions of people experience neck pain and/or related arm pain at some point in their lives. The vast majority of episodes of neck pain

will get better with time and can be addressed with non-surgical treatments.

Ongoing neck pain may be caused by a specific condition such as a cervical herniated disc, cervical stenosis, cervical degenerative disc disease, or cervical osteoarthritis.

Learn more about these conditions and their telltale symptoms:

<http://www.spine-health.com/conditions/neck-pain/types-neck-pain>

NECK EXERCISES FOR NECK PAIN

Chronic or recurrent neck pain can be severely debilitating and can also be accompanied by upper back pain, shoulder blade pain and headaches. These symptoms, along with tight neck muscles and

stiff joints, can make even the simplest daily activities painful.

An appropriate neck exercise program can address most of these symptoms as follows:

Neck Stretches

Flexibility and stretching exercises can expand or preserve the range of motion...

Neck Strengthening

Specific strengthening exercises will help maintain improved posture...

Aerobic Conditioning

Aerobic exercises increase blood flow to the muscles and soft tissues of the neck and upper back...

Learn more about ways to exercise the neck and its benefits:

<http://www.spine-health.com/conditions/neck-pain/neck-exercises-neck-pain>

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