

Exercises

These exercises should be started as soon as possible. Only do each exercise as far as it is comfortable. The amount of movement should increase with time as your pain improves.

These exercises are best done little and often, a few at a time regularly through the day.



Slowly look up and down.



Slowly rotate your head from side to side.



Draw your chin in, moving your head backwards to give yourself a double chin.



Slowly tilt your head from side to side.



Roll your shoulders.

Whiplash



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What is Whiplash?

Whiplash is a common injury to the neck usually caused by a vehicle accident.

The injury occurs as your head is thrown forwards and backwards in a 'whip like' movement.

This results in injury to the muscles and ligaments in your neck as they are quickly and forcefully overstretched.



In more severe injuries other structures such as the joints, disc and nerves can also be injured.

The extent of the injury will depend on the nature of the accident, for example the speed and direction of impact.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis can be made by a doctor or Physiotherapist from the history and examination. In most cases an x-ray is not required.

Signs and Symptoms

- Pain and stiffness around the neck which often develops after several hours or the following day after the accident
- Difficulty turning your head
- Pain may also be felt in your shoulders and down your arms
- Dizziness
- Headaches

How long will it last?

In most cases symptoms start to improve within a few days or weeks, however, it is not unusual for the symptoms to last for several months.

Recovery, in some circumstances, can seem very slow but the majority of people make a full recovery with no long term problems.

Early treatment has been shown to be effective to enhance this recovery.

As far as possible continue with normal activities.

Treatment

- **Ice Pack** - to help relieve inflammation, apply for 10-15 minutes.
- **Painkillers and Anti-Inflammatories** - see your GP or pharmacist.
- **Exercise** - gentle movements to prevent and help stiffness in the neck. Some exercises are given in this leaflet. They should be started as early as possible.
- **Physiotherapy** - involves treatment such as ultrasound, joint mobilisation, stretching and strengthening exercise, postural and ergonomic advice.
- **Posture** - maintain a good posture to help decrease the stress through the injured tissues. Avoid slouching.

