

HEADACHES & NECK PAIN



3 SIMPLE WAYS TO ELIMINATE PAIN

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About the Author - Doctor of Chiropractic Alexandra Smiljanic



Alex has worked within the Chiropractic profession since 2008 and has supported thousands of patients on their journey to better health.

Alex and her team are passionate about supporting all patients with bespoke care to ensure that their physical and emotional wellbeing is the best it can be. She is trained in biomechanics, orthopaedics and neurology to ensure the optimum functioning of nerve, muscle and joint systems in the body. Alex also has additional training in paediatric and pregnancy care.

Alex currently supports the development of new Chiropractors in the profession and runs training for practice owners to ensure the best patient care countrywide. She works as a consultant for complicated neurological cases within the clinic.

Headaches and neck pain 3 simple ways to eliminate pain

Headaches and neck pain are extremely common. So much so, that we almost think they are normal. However, pain is the body's way of letting us know that there is a problem. Neck pain and headaches can commonly be caused by 2 problems:

1) Problem 1: The Nerves

In your neck there are 3 nerves which send messages up into the head. These messages work our muscles and support our balance when we turn. They also work with some nerves that supply the face. Small joints in your neck (the facet joints), which should move freely, can become stuck or irritated and cause inflammation. This inflammation can then irritate the nerves. This can cause local neck pain or can refer to the head in several patterns.

2) Problem 2: The Muscles

The neck also contains a number of muscles which allow us to move our head in every direction. These muscles can become short and tight, most commonly from sitting at a desk all day, which can cause pain when we move. They can also refer pain to the head in a pattern known as a 'trigger point referral'.

Very frequently nerve irritation and muscle pain occur at the same time, which can become extremely painful.

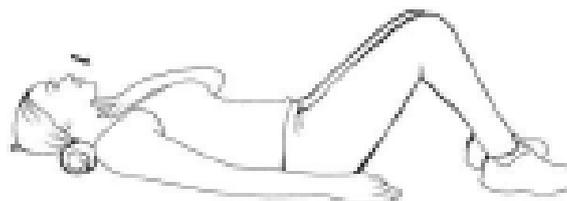
How can we eliminate pain? Here are our 3 simple ways

1) THE ROLLED-UP TOWEL

If nerves are irritated and muscles are tense and tight (especially when we are stressed), we can relax these muscles and take pressure away from the nerve by using a rolled-up towel.

Take a small hand towel and roll it long ways to about a 6 cm thickness. Lying on your back (face up) on a flat surface (ideally not a bed as you will sink into it), place the rolled-up towel down under your neck where the back of your skull meets your neck. Your head should become slightly bent forward.

Relax on the towel for 10 minutes breathing gently. You should feel the neck muscles relaxing and often will feel a reduction in your pain.



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2) AVOID SITTING ON A PC, TABLET OR PHONE FOR LONG PERIODS

Our heads are heavy. They weigh on average 10-11 pounds and are about 8 % of your body weight. The weight of the head is designed to be supported by the whole of the spine. In modern living, we often sit and look forwards and down. This pulls our neck forward, causing it to balance on only the neck joints. This also causes extra stress on the muscles and can lead to neck joints becoming stuck. To reduce this, we recommend the following:

- Sit straight at a desk or table (rather than twisted on a sofa or chair). This allows your spine to be as straight as possible to support the weight of your head.
- Position your PC, Tablet or phone in front of your eyes, as close to eye level as possible. This reduces tension on your neck muscles.
- Only look at your device for 30 minutes at a time. In our busy lives, this can often be difficult to achieve. We are not however, recommending you take a break. Just standing up and walking around you desk and sitting back down can be enough to reset you head and neck position.

3) GENTLE STRETCHES

When muscles become stressed or tense, they often shorten. By gently stretching the neck we can often relieve and prevent some of the pain we experience in our neck.

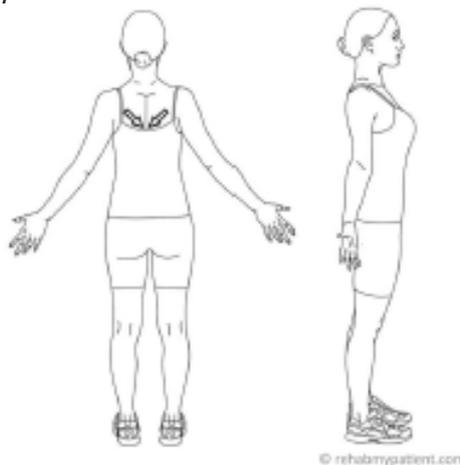
EXERCISE 1

- Sitting comfortably in an upright position gently tip your right ear to your right shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds, breathing gently.
- Sitting comfortably in an upright position gently tip your left ear to your left shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds, breathing gently



EXERCISE 2

Sitting comfortably in an upright position, take your arms up 45 degree to your sides. Then draw your arms back as if you are squeezing a ball between your shoulder blades. Hold for 10 seconds, breathing gently.



EXERCISE 3

- Sitting comfortably in an upright position gently turn your head to the right as far as you comfortably can. Hold for 10 seconds, breathing gently.
- Sitting comfortably in an upright position gently turn your head to the left as far as you comfortably can. Hold for 10 seconds, breathing gently



BE CHECKED AND TREATED BY A PROFESSIONAL

We have covered some easy ways to support in reducing neck pain and headaches. However, often they can be more complicated as they can:

- be caused by a Trauma i.e. a whiplash
- involve a trapped nerve
- originate from a disc problem
- be hormonal or diet related
- be linked with migraines or more.

A Chiropractor will take a detailed case history and thoroughly assess your spine, nerves and muscles to find the root of your pain. They can often use X-rays and MRIs to diagnose or rule out other conditions that cause pain. This is very important when looking after neck pain and headaches, as it ensures we are taking care of the underlying cause. Should your problem be nerve, muscle or joint based, chiropractors use very gentle techniques to un-trap nerves, rebalance joints and relax muscles to reduce and relieve your pain.

Massage is a wonderful way to relax tight muscles, relieve tension and reduce stress. Trigger point massage reduces headache pain referred from neck muscles. Sports massage offers deep tissue work to break down knots in the muscles and relaxing massage offer an overall stress reduction.

CONCLUSION

So here are our 3 ways to reduce headaches and neck pain. To get the best results we recommend a combination of all the advice above. Most importantly, stay active, and seek professional advice if any of your symptoms worsen or you are unsure where to begin.

Should you wish for any help, advice or support, please feel free to call us on 01245 699152 for a free telephone consultation.

HEALTH ADVICE DISCLAIMER

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and prognosis displayed throughout this guide. However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our clinics. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending on background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow advice and various other physical factors. It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed accurate in the absence of examination from one of the General Chiropractic Council Registered Chiropractors, or Professionally registered Massage Therapists at Inspired Health Chiropractic Ltd. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this report.

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Inspired Health Chiropractic Ltd, Unit 3 Reeds Farm Estate, Roxwell Road, Writtle, Essex, CM13ST.

www.inspiredhealthchiropractic.com