



NECK PAIN AND HEADACHE – SELF HELP

TREAT THE CAUSE, NOT THE SYMPTOM

The majority of neck pain and headaches seem to be linked with the habit of slumping our head and shoulders forward. Smart phones, computers and cars are just some of the modern things that are constantly inviting us to do this. Chronic shortening of the pectoral muscles on the front of our chest leads to painful overstretching of weaker muscles on the back of our neck and shoulders. We then tend to feel overload pain between our shoulder blades, up the back of our necks and into our heads. For some people this can snowball into a migraine attack.

The best way to reduce neck pain and headaches is to lengthen out through the front of the chest. Two important stretches are shown below. Stretches need to be long, slow and gentle to be effective. It is critical NOT to stretch any of the overloaded muscles on the back of our neck and shoulders, (although this can feel good in the moment, it worsens the underlying muscle imbalance and increases the likelihood of pain). Another important thing to do is to sit well at your desk (see “DESK POSTURE”).

Always listen to your body – if a stretch doesn’t feel right, stop doing it.

NECK PAIN AND HEADACHE STRETCHES



Pectoral Stretch



Penguin Stretch



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This information sheet is designed as general advice only and does not take into account specific patient circumstances. It should not replace individual assessment by a health practitioner.