

How Can Physiotherapy Help

- Physiotherapists are specifically trained in musculoskeletal assessment. This makes them the ideal health professionals to treat injuries or problems with joints, bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments. They can recognize contributing factors to neck pain and headaches
- After a detailed **assessment**, a **treatment plan** would be designed to meet the needs and goals of the client. This may include:

Education

- on the cause of the pain
- proper posture, body mechanics and ergonomics (proper computer positioning, driving, standing)
- stress reduction and relaxation techniques

Exercises

- proper activation of small stabilizing muscles and balancing the pull of muscles of the head, neck, shoulder, jaw and back
- stress reduction and relaxing exercises

Manual Therapy

- techniques to help assist the body to loosen and promote proper healing of specific tissues such as fascia, muscle, ligaments, nerve, bones and joints, including cranialsacral therapy

For more information or, should you require physiotherapy treatment, please contact

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PHYSIOTHERAPY. IT'LL MOVE YOU

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Neck Pain Headaches



What You Should Know

Look inside to see how Physiotherapy can help you to..

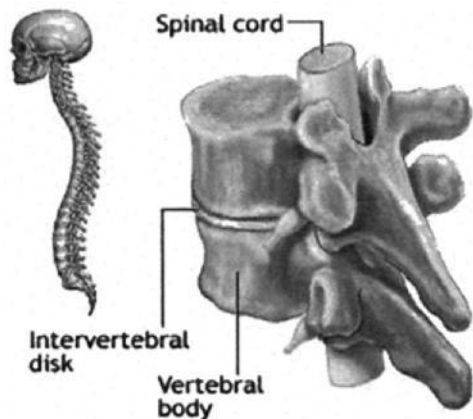
- Decrease or eliminate any symptoms of pain or dysfunction.
- Prevent chronic strain on joints or soft tissue.

How Your Neck Works

The spine is a system of interlocking components. The bones or vertebrae are stacked on top of each other and are suspended by discs. The head sits on top of these vertebrae.

Our head weighs 8-10- lbs, therefore it is important for this to sit directly on top of the neck to prevent excessive muscle work.

The vertebrae are held in ideal alignment (at rest and during movement) by the support of soft tissue in this area (muscles, ligaments, fascia). Good positioning helps to allow space for nerves and circulation to go through the brain without pinching or pressure on these structures.



***SUDDEN OR SEVERE HEADACHES
SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED -
CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN***

Causes of Neck Pain/Headaches

- **Postural stress** – poor posture anywhere along the spine can put abnormal pressure on structures of the neck and head. Cracking of the neck is often a sign of abnormal pressure.
- **Trauma** – Motor vehicle accidents, falls, bangs to the head and/or quick head movements can pull or tear the soft tissue in the neck or head. Muscles, ligaments, discs, nerves, blood vessels can receive mild to moderate injury which needs to heal properly to prevent abnormal positioning in the future.
- **Mental stress** – often is held in the neck and jaw areas including clenching and grinding.
- **Muscle imbalance** – improper timing of small muscles to control the vertebrae or poor strength of the larger muscles to support the spine (abdominals).
- **Eye strain**
- **Nerves** – pressure on nerves of the neck can cause headaches
- **Circulation** – contractions, swelling and stretching of the blood vessels can cause vascular headaches (migraines)
- **Hormonal abnormalities**
- **Joint/bone abnormalities of neck, jaw or skull**
- **Environmental triggers** – food additives, changes in caffeine intake, odors, smoking

Medication – some medication, long term use or high dosages can cause headaches.

Tips to Prevent Neck Pain/Headaches

Posture – think tall, chin tucked in, head over body, shoulders relaxed

Avoid eye strain – read with good lighting and head in a good position. If on computer, make sure screen is at ideal distance for **your** eyes. If wearing bifocals, try to keep your neck in a good position while moving your eyes.



Manage Stress – use exercise to help relieve stress and relaxation to ensure muscles let go and don't remain tense. Deep breathing helps.

Use good arm positions without excessive gripping or lifting from the neck muscles (hiking shoulders).

Balance Muscles – small stabilizing muscles keep the joints in line. Large muscles go from the neck to low back and shoulders, so it is important to keep these flexible with varying activities (ie if you work at a computer, try to also do activities such as swimming, walking which involve stretching arms, hip and back).