

If you have any concerns about the information given within this booklet please discuss with your Physiotherapist



**This leaflet is available in large print and other formats and languages.
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Patient Information

Whiplash

A guide to help you recover

Ongoing Management

This leaflet aims to help you recover from whiplash and answer some common questions

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What is Whiplash?

Whiplash is a common name for neck injury caused by a trauma such as a car accident. It can also occur after a sports injury, fall or direct blow to the head. The neck over stretches in one direction followed by overstretching in the opposite direction. Joints and ligaments in the neck can become irritated, and some muscles can become tense and weak in response to the pain.



What are the symptoms of Whiplash?

The following symptoms are common and are no reason for concern.

- Neck and back pain
- Neck and back stiffness
- Shoulder and jaw pain
- Pins and needles
- Dizziness
- Headaches



Exercise 3

Imagine your chin is on a tray and slide your chin backwards

Do not tilt your head up or down



Exercise 3



Exercise 4

Keep your shoulders level

Slowly look down, taking your chin to your chest

Slowly look up, tilting your head to the ceiling



Exercise 4



Exercise 5

Slowly roll your shoulders in smooth circles

Repeat this in both directions



Exercise 5

Repeat each exercise 10 times, 3 times a day

Are there any exercises I can do to help me recover?

Exercises are very helpful. They are safe and effective and should be done regularly each day. Initial discomfort is not a reason for concern but do not push in to pain. Start each exercise with a good posture. Stop if any exercise gives you pins and needles.



Keep your shoulders level

Slowly turn your head to the left and then to the right



Keep your shoulders level

Slowly tilt your head to the left and then to the right.

Hold each stretch for 10 seconds



Should I use pain control?

Pain killers can allow you to keep your neck moving and speed up your recovery. It is better to take your painkillers regularly rather than waiting until the pain is severe. Do not take more than the prescribed medication as too much medication can also slow your recovery. Consult your GP if you would like any advice about your pain relief.

How long will Whiplash affect me?

After a Whiplash injury it is very rare that serious damage has occurred. Although symptoms may persist for a while, the acute pain will improve within a few days or weeks. Your neck has a natural ability to repair, which is helped by activity. Only a small proportion of people have symptoms that last longer than six months.

When should I be concerned?

Seek medical advice if you experience any of the following;

- Muscle weakness
- Reduced feeling in arms
- Unsteadiness on feet
- Changes in speech
- Clumsiness
- Changes in swallowing
- Changes in vision
- Constant increasing pain
- Problems with bladder or bowel
- Poor co-ordination

Should I rest my neck?

Prolonged rest and inactivity is unhelpful. Avoiding daily activities will slow your recovery. Some activities may involve some pain, but this is not harmful.

Top tips to avoid resting too much

- Stay as active as possible. Try to continue with your hobbies but be prepared to adapt them for a short time.
- Little and often is the best way to do things.
- Short walks will help you to keep moving.
- Avoid staying in one position too long and change position regularly.
- Do not use neck collars as they cause your neck to become stiff and weak.

Should I go back to work?

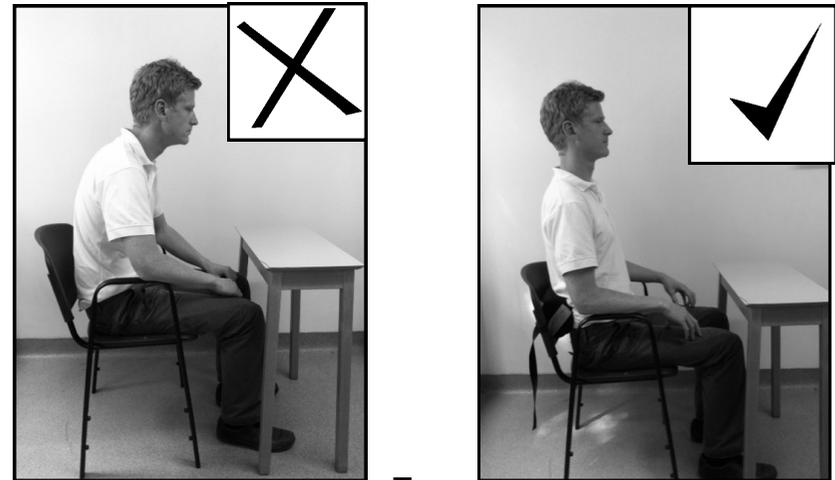
The latest scientific evidence shows that returning to work will encourage you to move your neck and will significantly aid your recovery. You may need to gradually return to your usual duties.

Is it normal for me to be worried and anxious?

It is perfectly normal to be anxious following whiplash. Try not to worry about the pain and don't be frightened to move. Normal activity and a positive approach are the keys to avoiding long term problems. Relaxation techniques have been shown to help reduce anxiety and pain following whiplash.

Why is posture so important?

A good posture is important to keep your spine in good alignment. Poor posture can lead to pain and stiffness.



Top
tips for maintaining a good posture

- Sit back in your chair. Use a small cushion in the small of your back to maintain the spine's natural curve.
- Bring your shoulders back and tuck in your chin.
- If working at a computer, make sure the screen is directly in front of you and you are not tilting your head.
- Change position regularly to manage your pain.
- Experiment with sleeping positions as there is no particular position that will suit everybody. Too many pillows can put too much strain on your neck. Try to keep your spine in a neutral position.