

Back & Neck Sprains

Diagnosis Explanation:

A **back or neck sprain** occurs when the **ligaments (connective tissues between bones)** are **overstretched or torn**, usually due to **sudden movements, poor posture, heavy lifting, or trauma (whiplash, falls, sports injuries)**. Symptoms include **pain, stiffness, swelling, muscle spasms, and reduced mobility**. Recovery time varies, but **mild sprains heal in 2-4 weeks**, while **moderate to severe sprains** may take **6+ weeks**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **good posture**, take breaks to **sit and stretch**, and wear **supportive shoes**.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **heavy lifting, twisting, and bending**. Use a **brace if needed** and lift with your **legs, not your back**.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Use an **ergonomic chair with lumbar support**, keep **feet flat on the floor**, and take **standing breaks every 30-60 minutes**.
- **Avoid:** Prolonged sitting or standing, sudden movements, and activities that strain the back or neck.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you run or play sports:** Avoid **high-impact activities** and switch to **low-impact exercises** like walking or swimming.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify poses to **avoid deep spinal twists, backbends, or excessive neck flexion**.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **deadlifts, squats, overhead presses, and shrugs**; focus on **core stability and controlled resistance movements**.
- **Avoid:** Heavy lifting, sudden twisting, deep bending, and high-impact sports.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for ligament and connective tissue repair.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and reduce spasms.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Vitamin D3 + Calcium** - 1000 IU/500mg daily for bone and ligament support.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support ligament and muscle healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce pain

and swelling.

- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tissue hydration.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to support healing and prevent stiffness.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Back & Neck Sprains)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Swelling):

- **RICE Protocol (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)** - Apply ice for **15-20 minutes, 3x/day** to reduce swelling.
- **Pelvic Tilts (For Low Back Sprains)** - Lie on your back, flatten lower back against the floor, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Chin Tucks (For Neck Sprains)** - Tuck chin straight back, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 3x/day**.
- **Gentle Neck & Shoulder Rolls** - Roll shoulders forward and backward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Improving Stability & Mobility):

- **Glute Bridges** - Lie on your back, lift hips while engaging the core, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Bird Dog Exercise** - On hands and knees, extend opposite arm and leg, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Angels (For Neck & Upper Back Stability)** - Stand against a wall, slowly raise and lower arms, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Enhancing Strength):

- **Seated Rows (Resistance Band)** - Pull band toward chest while keeping back straight, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Side Planks (Modified if Needed)** - Hold for **10-20 seconds**, increase gradually.
- **Swimming or Stationary Cycling** - **15-20 minutes/day** for low-impact strengthening.

Helpful Books:

1. *Treat Your Own Back & Neck* - Robin McKenzie (self-treatment techniques for spinal recovery).
2. *The Back Pain Relief Plan: A 7-Step Recovery Guide to Restore Mobility & Live Pain-Free* - Mark J. Green.

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Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.