

Cervical Radiculopathy

Diagnosis Explanation:

Cervical radiculopathy occurs when a **nerve in the neck (cervical spine) is compressed or irritated**, often due to **herniated discs, arthritis, bone spurs, or spinal degeneration**. This can cause **pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness** that radiates down the **shoulder, arm, and hand**. Symptoms may worsen with **neck movement, poor posture, or prolonged sitting**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **good posture**, avoid looking down for long periods, and take frequent breaks to stretch.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **overhead lifting and heavy loads**; use proper mechanics and lift with your legs.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Adjust your **monitor to eye level**, use a **headset for calls**, and take breaks every **30 minutes** to stretch.
- **Avoid:** Prolonged neck flexion (looking down), repetitive overhead work, and excessive heavy lifting.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you run or play sports:** Avoid **high-impact activities and contact sports** that put stress on the neck.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify poses to **avoid deep neck flexion or extension** (e.g., avoid shoulder stands).
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **overhead presses, shrugs, and heavy deadlifts**; focus on **controlled resistance exercises**.
- **Avoid:** High-impact sports, excessive neck movement, and activities that worsen symptoms.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and reduce nerve pain.
- **Vitamin B12** - 1000mcg daily to support nerve health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.
- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for spinal disc and ligament support.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

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

healing.

- **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 keep spinal discs hydrated.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Cervical Radiculopathy)

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

- **Neck Retractions ("Chin Tucks")** - Gently tuck chin straight back, hold for **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 3x/day**.
- **Scalene Stretch** - Tilt head to one side, hold **20 seconds**, repeat **3x/day**.
- **Upper Trap Stretch** - Sit upright, gently pull head to the side, hold **20 seconds**, repeat **3x/day**.
- **Nerve Glides (Median Nerve Stretch)** - Extend arm out to the side, bend and straighten wrist, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.

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

- **Isometric Neck Holds** - Press hand against forehead or side of head, resist motion, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Shoulder Blade Squeezes** - Pinch shoulder blades together, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Angels** - Stand with back against wall, raise arms up and down slowly, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.

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

- **Theraband Rows** - Pull resistance band toward body, keeping elbows close, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Thoracic Extension Stretch** - Use a foam roller or chair back to stretch upper spine, hold **20 seconds, 3x/day**.
- **Gentle Yoga (Neck-Friendly Poses)** - Child's pose, cat-cow stretch, seated twists.

Helpful Books:

1. *Treat Your Own Neck* - Robin McKenzie (self-treatment techniques for neck pain and nerve issues).
2. *The Neck Pain Solution* - Jeremy Sutton (exercise-based approach to reducing cervical pain).

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

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