

Neck Arthritis

Diagnosis Explanation:

Neck arthritis, also known as **cervical spondylosis**, is the **degeneration of the cervical spine's discs, joints, and bones** due to **aging, repetitive stress, or past injuries**. It can lead to **stiffness, chronic neck pain, reduced mobility, and nerve compression (cervical radiculopathy)**, causing **pain, tingling, or weakness in the arms and hands**. Symptoms often worsen with **poor posture, prolonged sitting, or repetitive neck movements**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **good posture**, use **supportive footwear**, and take 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:

- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin** - 1500mg/1200mg daily for joint and cartilage health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Vitamin D3 + Calcium** - 1000 IU/500mg daily for bone and joint support.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and prevent spasms.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (salmon, leafy greens, turmeric, berries, nuts) to reduce joint inflammation.

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support muscle and ligament healing.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tissue lubrication.
- **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 Neck Arthritis)

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

- **Chin Tucks** - Tuck chin straight back, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 3x/day**.
- **Neck Side Bends** - Tilt head to each side, hold **20 seconds**, repeat **3x/day**.
- **Upper Trap Stretch** - Sit upright, gently pull head to the side, hold **20 seconds, 3x/day**.
- **Shoulder Blade Squeezes** - Pinch shoulder blades together, hold **5 seconds**, 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**.
- **Wall Angels** - Stand against a wall, slowly raise and lower arms, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Seated Thoracic Extension Stretch** - Sit in a chair, place hands behind head, gently arch backward, hold **10 seconds, repeat 3x/day**.

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

- **Resistance Band Rows** - Pull band toward chest while keeping back straight, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Thoracic Extension on Foam Roller** - Lie on a foam roller and gently stretch upper back, 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 arthritis).
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.