

Neck Strain

Diagnosis Explanation:

A **neck strain** occurs when the **muscles or tendons in the neck are overstretched or torn**, often due to **poor posture, sudden movements, heavy lifting, prolonged screen use, or sleeping in an awkward position**. Symptoms include **pain, stiffness, muscle spasms, and difficulty turning the head**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **good posture**, take breaks to **stretch**, and avoid looking down for long periods.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **overhead lifting and sudden neck movements**; use proper lifting techniques.
- **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, excessive stress, and sudden neck movements.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you run or play sports:** Reduce **high-impact activities** and switch to **low-impact options** like swimming or cycling.
- **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 **shrugs, overhead presses, and heavy deadlifts**; focus on **controlled resistance exercises**.
- **Avoid:** Sudden neck movements, excessive stretching, and activities that worsen stiffness.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and prevent spasms.
- **Vitamin B12** - 1000mcg daily to support nerve and muscle function.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.
- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for muscle and connective tissue repair.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

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

- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tissue elasticity.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to keep muscles hydrated and prevent tightness.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Neck Strain)

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

- **Heat Therapy** - Apply a **warm compress or heating pad** for **15-20 minutes, 2-3x/day** to relax muscles.
- **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 Rolls** - Roll shoulders forward and backward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

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

- **Chin Tucks** - Tuck chin straight back, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 3x/day**.
- **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, raise arms up and down, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

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

- **Resistance Band Rows** - Pull band toward chest while keeping back straight, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Foam Rolling for Upper Back** - Lie on a foam roller and gently roll to release tension, **1-2 minutes, 2x/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 strains).
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.