

# headache stretch guide

## neck turn



Gently turn head to the R, looking over R shoulder. Stop when the stretch is felt in L side of the neck

## headaches

Tension headaches are one of the most common medical complaints. This type of headache is frequently caused by contraction of the neck, shoulder, upper back and jaw muscles. These muscles can refer pain from the original site into the head.

## chin tuck



Sit straight with shoulders down. Pull your chin inwards to make a double chin and hold.

## sternocleidomastoid stretch



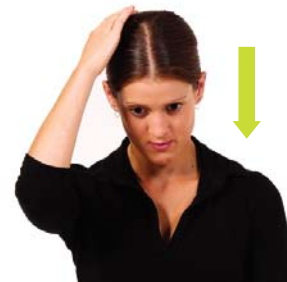
Turn head to look behind and over R shoulder. Keeping head turned R, tilt head back slightly to feel stretch down front L of neck.

## smart tips...

- Stretch gently and slowly
- Keep breathing
- Hold each stretch for 15 seconds
- Do not bounce stretches
- Stretch to the point of tension not pain
- Perform each stretch at least every 2 hours
- Repeat all stretches to left and right
- Ongoing pain should always be assessed by a qualified therapist

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## suboccipital stretch



Tuck your chin into chest while using hands to gently assist forward flexion of your neck.

## scalene stretch



Grasp seat of chair with L hand and gently pull ear to shoulder with R hand.

## levator scapulae



Grasp seat of chair with L hand. Place R hand on head to look at armpit. Pull head forward and down into your armpit.

## upper trapezius stretch



Place R hand on head, gently pull ear to R shoulder and tilt head slightly forward.

## heat therapy

Muscle tension restricts blood circulation and sends pain signals to the brain. Heat dilates blood vessels allowing increased oxygen and nutrients to reach the muscle and aid healing. Heat also stimulates the sensory receptors in the skin, decreasing the transmission of pain signals. Heat can facilitate stretching and help to increase flexibility of the muscle.



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## self massage

Massage increases blood circulation to the soft tissue which aids the healing process. Using your right hand on your left side, start by gently stroking from the base of your skull, down your neck to your shoulder. Glide back up your neck and repeat. Make gentle circular pressures with your fingertips on either side of your spine and work up your neck to your skull.