



Premier patient information

Whiplash

Whiplash Exercises

PREMIER
medical group

EVIDENTLY BETTER PRACTICE

Keep moving!

It may be painful but you'll get back to normal much quicker.

Moving forward (In fact – moving in any direction!)

Movement is the key to recovery! It is widely accepted that inactivity prolongs the pain, as muscles become stiff, and weaken.

A program of increasing exercise on a daily basis (as the pain allows) will return you to full health more quickly, as muscles become more relaxed and stronger.

Make a start: Although very tender and painful, do try to undertake some activity as soon after the injury as you can. Simply walking can help! You may find that it helps to lie down, sit or stand, or even start your exercises in a warm bath or shower. You should exercise at your own pace. Start by moving your neck to the point of pain, and then gradually



go a little further on each session. If the pain is particularly bad one day, adjust the frequency and range of movement accordingly. However do try to continue to do some exercises.

Please refer to our leaflet detailing specific exercises which you will find beneficial.

Precautions and general advice

It is generally recognised that exercise is safe and helps you to recover from whiplash, and it is highly unlikely that you will cause any further damage. You will undoubtedly experience a degree of pain. If you experience any of the specific symptoms listed below then reduce your exercise regime and call one of our nurses or speak to your GP.

- Dizziness, blurred vision, fainting or disorientation
- Sudden shooting pain down your arm; or numbness and/or weakness in your arm
- Unusually severe and persistent pain in your neck

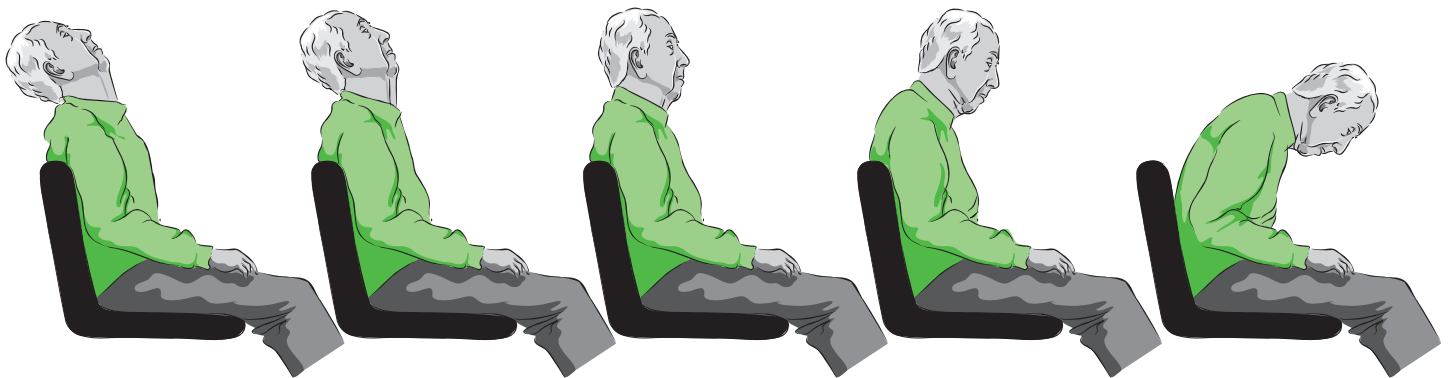
Such instances are rare and do not let the fear of pain prevent you from getting started! For each exercise start by moving your neck to the point of pain, and then gradually go a little further on each session. As you start to exercise you may find that your neck makes an occasional clicking noise. This is entirely normal and it is quite likely that you will feel a little better after such a noise. You will feel some discomfort and it may take several weeks for your neck muscles to strengthen sufficiently. If the pain is particularly bad one day, adjust the frequency and range of movement accordingly. However do try to continue to do some exercises.

Exercises

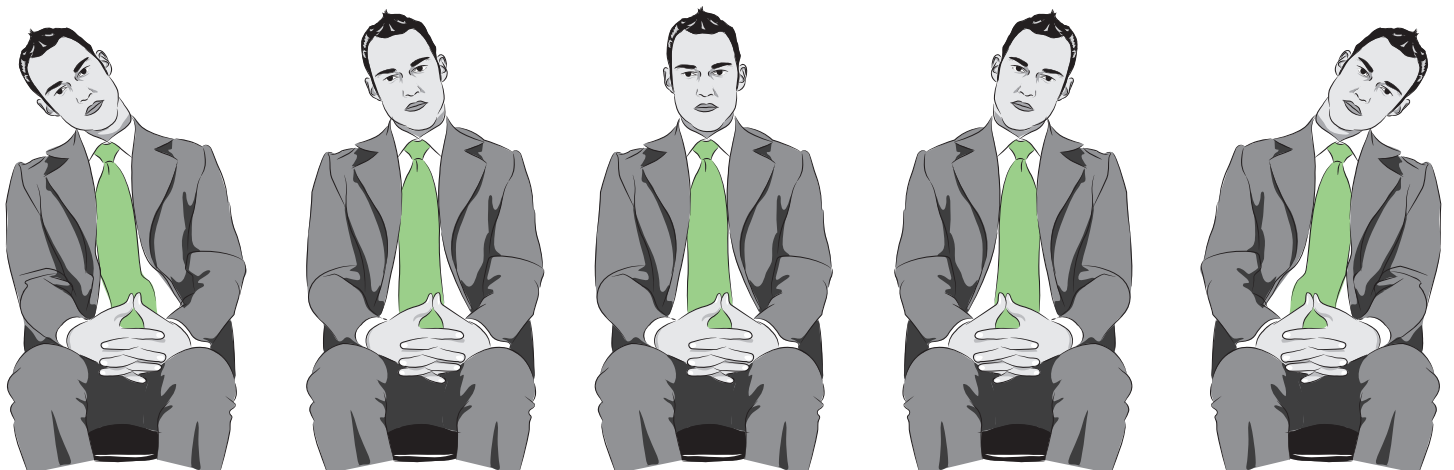
What follows are a range of exercises which will help, and you should work with ones that appear to focus on the core of the pain most.

Neck Stretching

- **Loosening up:** Slowly move your neck in all directions – forwards, backwards, and from side to side. Turn your head right and left and lift it up and down. Repeat the movements about ten times every hour.
- **Back and forth:** Tilt your head backwards and forwards as far as it will go and hold for about five seconds. Repeat 5 times



- **Side to side:** Tilt head to each side to the point of pain and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times



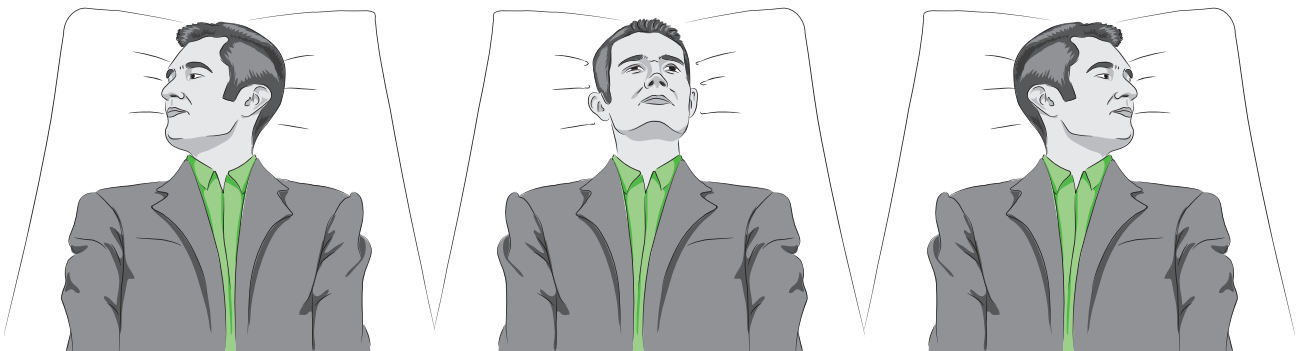
- **Rotation:** Rotate your head as far as you can to each side and hold for 5 seconds on each occasion. Repeat 5 times



- **Diagonal:** Turn your head to the left, and then look up and then down, holding for 5 seconds on each occasion. Repeat, looking to the right, and then repeat 5 times for each side.

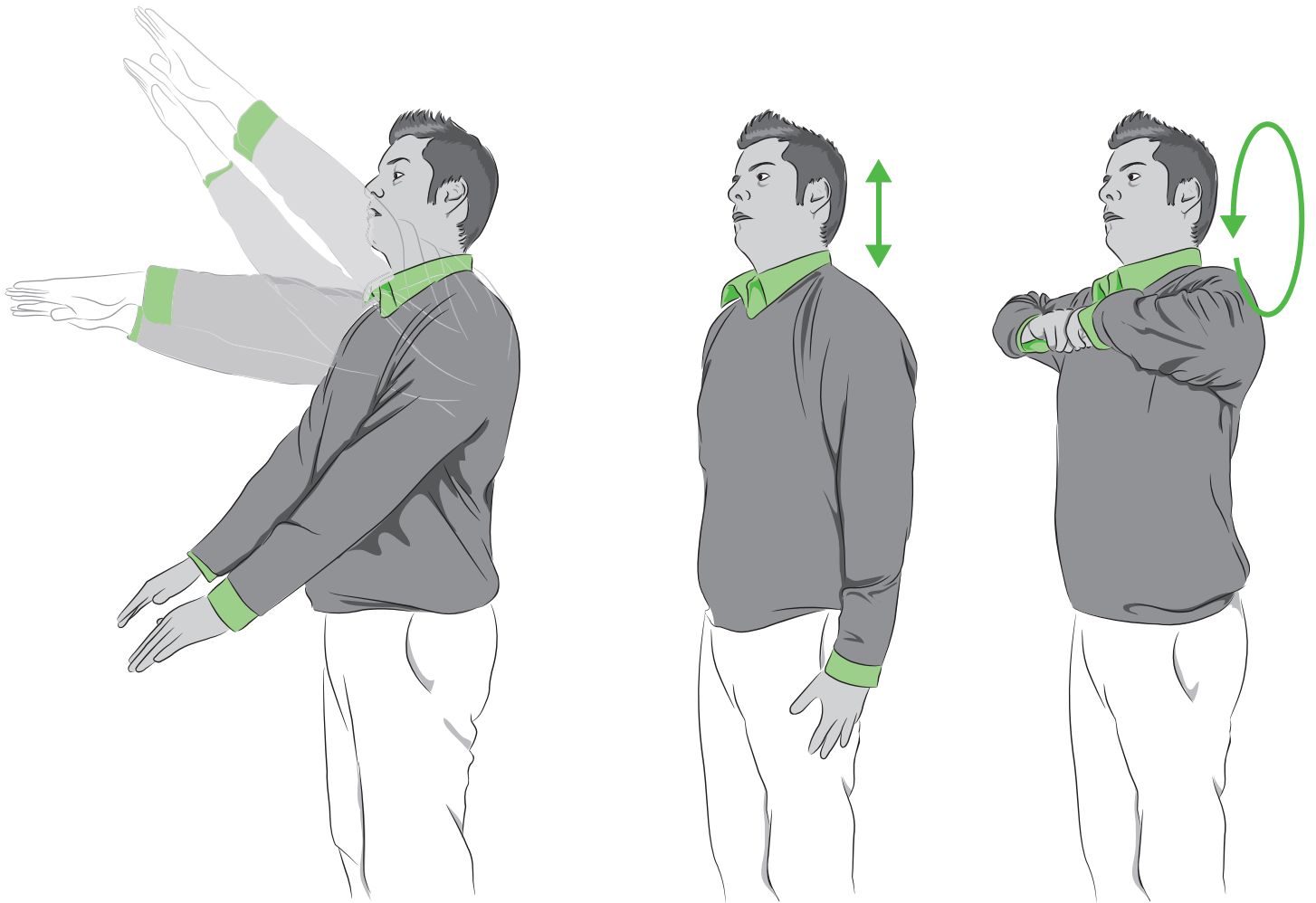


- **Gentle rocking:** Lie on your back and gently rock your head to one side then the other. You can repeat the rocking motion for about 30 to 100 times



Shoulder Stretching

- **Loosening up:** Circle your arms one at a time, backwards and forwards; like swimming a crawl or backstroke. Bending your arm at the elbows may make this exercise easier. Shrug your shoulders whilst breathing in, then relax them whilst breathing out. If you can, roll your shoulders.

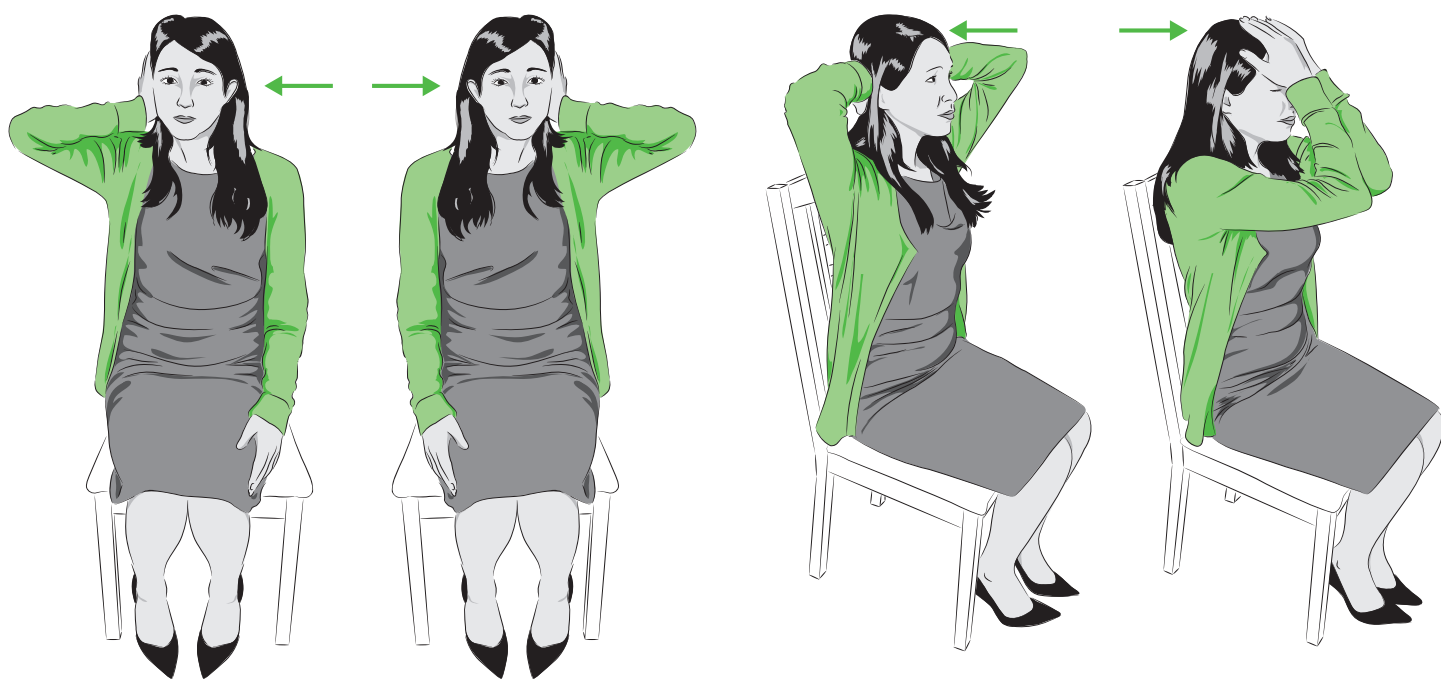


Neck Strengthening

- **Neck Strengthening:** With the palm of your hand gradually push against the side of your head. As you resist your muscles will contract. Hold the pressure for 10 seconds, then release gradually. Repeat to the other side, and forwards using both hand pressed against your forehead, and backwards with your hands clasped behind your head

Shoulder Stretching

- **Neck Control:** Sit and focus on a point on the wall. Close your eyes and turn your head to the left as far as you can. With your eyes closed turn your head back to where you think you were focused on the wall. Open your eyes to see how close you were. Repeat 6 times looking left, right, up and down.



Whiplash is a painful condition and should not be underestimated. However, it should not be regarded as disabling. The damage to your muscles and ligaments are repaired naturally by your body's healing processes, and a positive approach to your recovery can lead to you very quickly getting back to normal.

The injury may not have been your fault...but it is your neck, and you are best placed to fix it.

Contact details

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