

# Whiplash

## Advice and treatment

Following a road accident, fall or sports injury, it's common to experience pain and stiffness in your neck and shoulders.

You may even feel arm pain, pins and needles or numbness. This is often known as whiplash.

## Signs and symptoms

It can take several hours for the symptoms of whiplash to start, but common symptoms include:

- Neck pain
- Neck stiffness and difficulty moving your head
- Headaches
- Pain and muscle tightness in the shoulders and arms

You can find out more about whiplash – including causes, symptoms and treatment suggestions – from the NHS website

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/whiplash/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/whiplash/)

## Treating whiplash

### What you can do

Treating the pain may take some time, but you can follow the suggestions in this leaflet to help.

**If you start to have trouble walking, or lose feeling in your arms and legs, please consult your doctor as soon as possible.**

# Treating whiplash

## Exercise

Follow these steady exercises to help reduce your neck pain. Start slowly, and gradually increase the intensity over time – but stop if you feel uncomfortable.

If your symptoms don't improve, please contact your GP who may refer you to a physiotherapist.

1

Slowly turn your head and look over your left shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs.

Then turn to look over your right shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs

Repeat each side 5 times

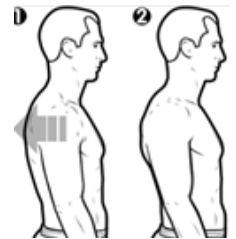


2

Shrug shoulders up, back and around.

Hold for 5-10 secs then relax

Repeat each side 5 times



3

Sitting in a chair with your arms across your chest, turn your trunk to the right and hold for 5 secs.

Then turn to the left

Repeat each side 5 times



4

Tilt your head towards your left shoulder and hold for 5-10 secs.

Return to the middle and tilt to your right shoulder, and hold 5-10 secs

Repeat each side 5 times



5

Stretch both hands overhead as high as possible

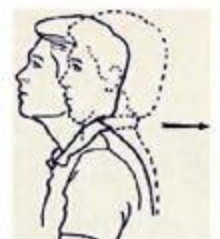
Repeat 5 times - hold 5-10 secs



6

Sitting with your back supported, gently tuck your chin into your chest

Repeat 5 times – hold 3 secs



### **Medication**

Painkillers can help reduce any discomfort you have. Please discuss with your GP or pharmacist what the best options are.

### **Driving**

Provided you can look over both shoulders, return to driving as soon as possible. Take regular breaks on long journeys, walk around and keep your neck moving. If you're unsure, please consult your GP.

### **At home/work**

Stay at work if possible. At home and work remember to keep moving, and change position regularly. Modify activities, including housework or gardening, if needed, but get back to normal as soon as possible, even if there is some discomfort with this.

### **Relaxation/Heat**

Some symptoms may be caused by overactive muscles around your neck and shoulders. Applying heat (for example, a heat pad) may help you relax. Walking, listening to calming music or using mindfulness apps may also help you relax.

This leaflet is intended to support the advice you've received from your GP and Physiotherapist. Please contact them if you have any further questions.

The exercise diagrams have been created by The Rehab Lab.

Visit Rehab Lab website [TheRehabLab.com/](http://TheRehabLab.com/)

## **How to contact us**

Visit our webpage [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy](http://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy)

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