

# Pain in the neck!

You can be hurt in this part of your body even without it receiving direct impact.



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It doesn't take something as serious as a car accident for your neck to hurt. Some fairly innocuous activities, especially if done often and long enough, can be the source.

### Activities that lead to neck pain

For example, the pain could arise if you tend to hold your head in an awkward position while watching TV, chatting on the phone or working on your laptop computer. Another common factor is sleeping on a pillow that is too high or too soft. Activities that require you to raise your arms — such as painting the ceiling — can lead to neck pain too. If you are stressed, sometimes tension develops along the muscle leading to the neck.

### Injuries that cause neck pain

Direct blows to the face or to the back or top of the head can lead to neck pains. But even when there is no direct contact with the neck, minor accidents such as trips and falls, and sports injuries can cause neck pains due to sudden and excessive motion in that part of the anatomy. Whiplash, which typically occurs in car accidents, is an injury caused by a severe jerk to the head.

### Other conditions

Chronic conditions (fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis) and age-related conditions (cervical spinal stenosis, the narrowing of the spinal canal, and arthritis of the neck) are possible causes of neck pain. An infection or a tumour in that area could also be a culprit.

### Symptoms

The pain is due to either strain, which is an overstretched or overused muscle, or sprain, which means the ligament is injured. The pain could spread to the shoulders and upper back, and make the neck stiff or tender. Movement may make you feel worse.

### Treatment options

You may wish to try commercial products, such as neck pillows, hot pads and ice packs. There are also neck stretching exercises that could be beneficial. You could also try alternative treatments such as acupuncture.

More conventional treatments, depending on individual cases, could range from heat/cold applications and traction to physical therapy (ultrasound, massage, manipulation) and topical anaesthetic creams or pain-relief patches. More serious cases may require injections of cortisone or surgical procedures. [🔗](#)

