



# Osteoarthritis in the Neck

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## Managing Neck Pain From Osteoarthritis

Are you one of the many people around the world who experience chronic neck pain? If you are, you must see a doctor. There are a variety of causes for chronic neck pain, and only an accurate diagnosis will ensure that you receive the appropriate treatment. Let's take a look at osteoarthritis in the neck.

### Stretching and Exercises

If you are diagnosed with osteoarthritis in the neck, begin a proactive treatment program to help manage your symptoms. The best exercise programs for this condition emphasize stretching.

You may find a yoga or Pilates program that teaches people with OA how to stretch the neck vertebrae and the spinal column. This will help you stay flexible and encourage blood flow to the area.

### Heat/Cold Therapy

Applying warmth, whether via a warm towel or a heat pack, provides relief to many people with OA of the neck. A warm bath or shower can achieve the same relief for pain and stiffness. Water therapy in a heated pool or whirlpool may also provide pain relief and can help to improve circulation.

Many people with osteoarthritis find that applying heat for twenty minutes before exercise allows them to move much more easily. This helps warm the muscles of the neck and prevent straining.

Oftentimes, cold packs will reduce your swelling and inflammation. A bag of ice wrapped in a towel, though simple, serves this purpose well. You can also use a bag of frozen peas!

If you find your neck aching from activity, a cold pack will help to calm the inflammation.

### Medications

There are two primary types of analgesics for controlling neck pain caused by osteoarthritis. The first is acetaminophen, like Tylenol, or NSAIDs, such as aspirin or ibuprofen.

Acetaminophen helps to alleviate pain, and it usually targets bone pain more accurately than NSAIDs. Aspirin and ibuprofen are anti-inflammatory analgesics, which means that they assist in pain and inflammation relief. If you're experiencing significant pain, you might consider alternating between Tylenol and NSAIDs for better pain control. Remember to always speak to your doctor about any pain medication you're taking.

Some people with OA use Tylenol, for instance, once every four hours so that it can be taken between doses of ibuprofen, which can be taken every six hours. Always allow at least two hours between medications, and speak

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to your doctor about any concerns you may have. Do not take more than one type of NSAID medication in one day.

### **Other Treatment Options**

There are several measures you should take to manage osteoporosis of the neck:

- Rest your neck when needed to offer relief from everyday strain.
- Chiropractic manipulation.
- Use of a cervical collar.
- Physical therapy, traction or exercise.
- Injection of steroid drugs or local anesthetic in the affected area.

Learn about some great techniques to help you cope with osteoarthritis.