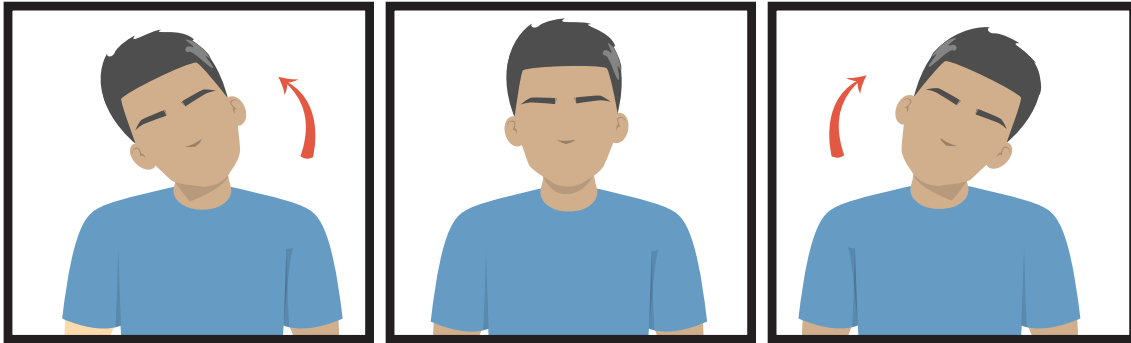


Muscle Stretches

During muscle stretching, the key is to gently stretch your muscles with smooth and slow motions. Never force a tight, tense muscle with sudden movements. Your muscles will let you know if you are treating them with the gentleness they like—or if you are not!

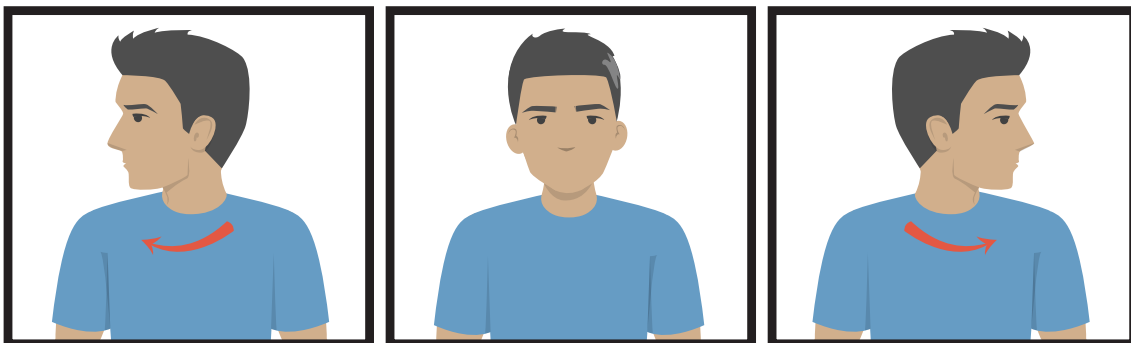
Exercise No. 1 - Side Bend

This exercise is designed to help stretch the upper shoulder muscles. While sitting or standing, gently bend your head to one side, trying to bring the ear as close as possible to the shoulder without raising the shoulder. Avoid turning your head while stretching it. Hold this position for six seconds, then relax. Repeat to other side.



Exercise No. 2 - Side Turn

This exercise stretches the muscles that turn your head. While sitting or standing, gently turn your head to one side, looking as far over your shoulder as you can. Hold for six seconds, then relax. Repeat to the other side.



Holroyd et al., 2000

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Muscle Stretches

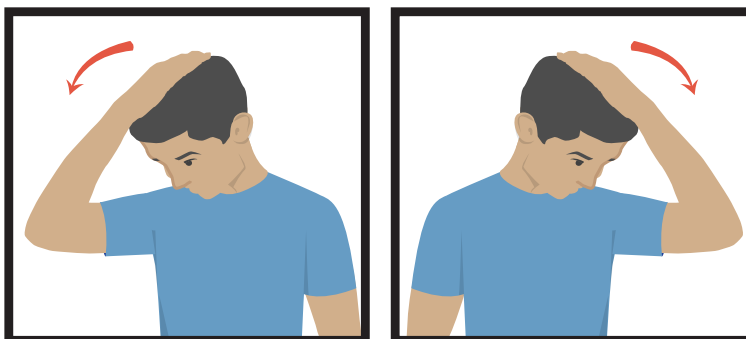
Exercise No. 3 - Forward Bend

This exercise is designed to stretch the muscles at the base of the neck and around the top of the spine. While sitting or standing, bend your head forward and try to touch your chin to your chest. You can place your hands behind your head and gently pull forward to increase the stretch. Hold for six seconds, then relax. Repeat.



Exercise No. 4 - Diagonal Bend

This exercise stretches the upper back and shoulder muscles. Turn your head about half way to the side and bend the head forward. You can use one hand and gently pull down on your head to increase the stretch. Hold for six seconds, then relax. Repeat.



Holroyd et al., 2000

VA



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