



The secret of a relaxed neck unveiled...

www.stress-free.org

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Preface

Neck complaints are very common, and many people suffer from them. Though, very few people know that neck complaints can be cured and prevented.

I have treated neck complaints for over 10 years as a physiotherapist, chair masseur and ergo therapist, so I know very well that neck complaints are very difficult to describe.

This E-book will give a short theoretical exposition of the anatomy of the neck and the reasons why stress in the neck can occur. But the most important aim is how we can relax our neck as well as possible with simple techniques and little time.

Because: relaxation is the most important aspect in preventing and curing neck complaints. Relaxation on every moment of the day and in every situation.

To really deal with neck complaints better, you need the right tools. Frankly, you need a whole tool-box with techniques and methods to prevent and cure neck complaints. This tool-box can be filled with methods described in this E-book. I will give you 31 tips; all of them are valuable methods and techniques to give you relaxation in your neck yet again.

It's not possible to let your neck complaints vanish in thin air with one idea or technique and not every method works well for everyone. You'll have to put your own package of methods together, that you can apply on the different aspects of your life. That can be attending to your eating habits, the amount of sleep you get, how you sit or stand, or your exercising pattern. Dealing with neck complaints effectively, means arranging your life effectively.



Very well, let's start!

Secrets of the neck

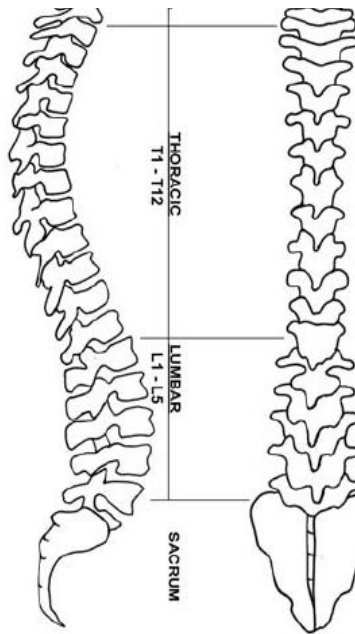
In an E-book it might seem a bit strange that there is giving so much background information, but I can ensure you that this background information is important to improve the self healing ability of your neck. We will give the 31 tips after this background information.

The spinal column



The spinal column is one of the most important parts of our body. Without a spinal column, we can't make our movements and we can't stand right up. The spinal column gives our body support, protects the spinal cord and makes sure we can make our movements. Through certain nerves in our spinal cord, information is transported to the brain and the subconscious brain. You understand it's very important to keep our spinal column healthy.

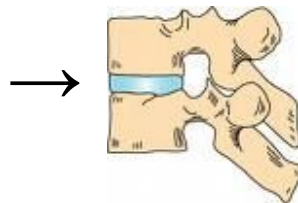
The spinal column is built of conjoined vertebrae. 7 cervical vertebrae (cervical curve), 12 thoracic vertebrae (thoracic curve), 5 lumbar vertebrae (lumbar curve) , 1 sacrum and coccygeal vertebrae (together the sacral curve).



A normal spinal column has the shape of an S if you look at it from the side. That s-shape helps a healthy spinal column to absorb all kinds of pressure. The back is elastic, so load is absorbed well.

Question: Which part of the spinal column has a good shock absorber as well?

Answer: The cervical disc



Between every 2 vertebrae there is an elastic disc: the cervical disc. The cervical disc functions as a shock absorber that can absorb pressure that's being put on the spinal column. It's an oval-round disc that consists of cartilage, connective tissue and water. On the outside it consists of some layers of which the fibers run in different directions. This gives the cervical disc a strong structure. With every movement of the back, the cervical disc will absorb the pressures for an important part. With a certain pressure the cervical disc will be flatter and broader. When this pressure disappears, the disc will retrieve its original shape. In the middle of the cervical disc there is a jelly type substance core. This core consists of 70 to 90% water. This makes the cervical disc transformable so that it can fulfill its role of shock absorber.

Skippyball



The core of the cervical disc is comparable to a skippy ball: when the pressure on the skippy ball increases, the skippy ball will become flatter and broader. When a heavier person is on the skippy ball (this means there's higher pressure), the skippy ball is compressed more than when someone lighter is on it (because the presser is lower). The water in the cervical disc is pressed out of the core by the pressure. When the pressure disappears, the water is being absorbed back into the core, and the cervical disc will retrieve its original shape. By doing this, the cervical disc's core feeds itself. You can compare this to a sponge. To prevent that the cervical disc dries out, it's very important that you keep exercising.

Muscles of the neck



To the spinal column, there are also muscles connected, through tendons. These muscles play an important part in your neck. They keep your head in balance and they make movement of head and shoulders possible. I won't name all muscles here, because you won't see the wood for the trees anymore and I promised to keep it simple.



Balance

Especially keeping the head in balance is an important function of the neck muscles. An average head weighs roughly 4.2 kilos; this doesn't seem that much, but try to tilt 4.2 kilos in front of your body with stretched arms. That's going to be pretty difficult!

Neck muscles have to be well adjusted to each other. If you bend your head forward, the muscles on the front will have to tighten and the muscles on the back will have to relax.

To hold your head up, you have to tighten your muscles with the same strength, otherwise your head will fall back or forwards.

For all of this you'll need good muscle coordination. They work together as a team and when one doesn't function as it should, the whole team doesn't function.

Complex highway

The neck is a very complex highway, through which all kinds of information are led. When you feel things with your hands, you breathe oxygen, blood streams from your heart through your body, you eat, drink, all you can think of, everything passes your neck.

There only has to be a small crash (for example muscle irritation) on this complex highway and there could be traffic jams. Results are: a stressed neck, "wrong" breathing, headaches, tingling in the fingers etc.

It's important to keep the roads up and clean and a good traffic controller is of big interest. Relaxation is the key in this!

31 Tips

We have now arrived at the practical part: the 31 methods and techniques.

Tip 1: The best sitting position behind your computer



Dynamic sitting is the best. That means sitting in different positions after each other, alternated with standing up and walking. By doing this, the blood flow in the cervical discs and muscles will be at its best, and the neck will be relieved.

There are some amazing workout techniques behind your computer at:

www.getfitwhileyousit.com

Tips for your work environment

- Let your computer working spot be inspected by a company physiotherapist or an ergonomist.
- Don't work with a laptop for more than 2 hours, or use a laptop holder/docking station.
- Take a break every 2 hours.
- Use short breaks, in which you can do your exercises.
- Sit actively.
- Have enough space (about 5 cm space) between the front of your chair and your calf.
- Have your screen on eye height.
- Put your feet flat on the floor and sit up straight.
- The working environment has to be well adjusted to the employee.

Tip 2: Preventing the natural aging of the cartilage in the neck

You can't cure it, but you can prevent it!

With the years comes wear and tear. After a lifelong of heavy work and having a rough time, your body will reveal its weak spots. But should we put up with inconveniently stiff joints and other infirmities of old age? No we shouldn't. A lot of these complaints are preventable.

Did you know that 70 to 80% of the Dutch people have worn out joints? An alarming high number. Luckily "just" 35% of those people really have trouble with it.

The annoying thing about worn joints is that you can't cure them. Once worn is always worn. Luckily there's good news. Because worn joints are well preventable. Or at least delay able.

300 kilo pressure on the dorsal vertebrae

Without you noticing, your body deals with a lot of pressure, every day. Even when you're sitting, there's about a 100 kilo of weight pressuring your dorsal vertebrae. That can go to as much as 300 kilo when you tilt 20 kilo. A proper carriage when sitting, standing or tilting is very important to prevent neck complaints.

A proper carriage is important to lessen the load on the joints. But at least as important is to improve the amount of load the body can take. In normal English: Stay in good shape. It may sound a little contradictory, but by walking, cycling or swimming half an hour a day you can prevent a lot of wear and tear complaints.

It's logical that joints wear out a lot faster with heavy load. Too much is never good. But most wear and tear complaints develop gradually and are unnoticed. The body is like an elastic band: When you pull it, it will snap sooner or later. For one person faster than the other. To keep that elastic band flexible, it's important you think when you're doing something. In the garden, for example, use tools with which you don't have to bend over. Choose for the bike with the right frame size and with the right handlebar and saddle height. Keep your back straight while vacuum cleaning. And take turns in your activities. Everyday points to keep your attention on, with which you can spare your neck for an important part.

Tip 3: Stretch exercise for the neck muscles

By stretching your muscles a number of times in an amount of time, the circulation in these muscles (and tendons) will be improved, so that waste products are transported well.

Neck pain will hereby be prevented or cured and the muscles will be brought in a flexible and relaxed condition. The stretching of a muscle takes about 8 seconds and the stretching will be gradually stronger.

For every exercise counts: The stretching may not hurt under any circumstance, if this should happen, stop doing the exercise!

You can do stretching exercises everywhere. They are pretty easy to do, but can lead to astonishing results. I'll give some practical stretching exercises. Do them at least twice a day.

Exercise 1

Try carefully moving your left ear to your left shoulder, make sure your shoulder doesn't come up. Feel the stretch in your neck and keep it there for about 8 seconds, then release. Do this exercise 3 times.

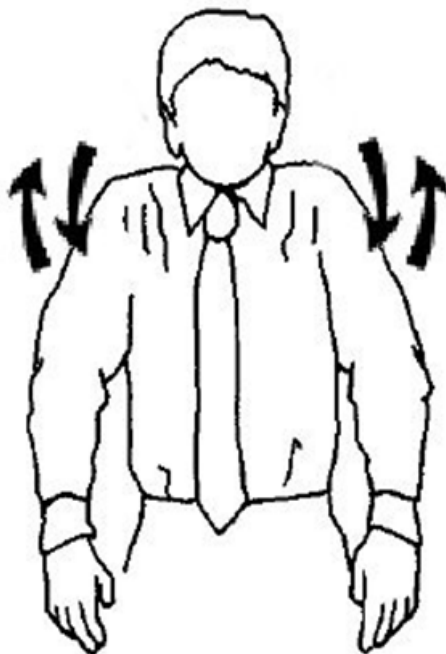


This exercise shouldn't cause any pain and you may not have any dizziness. If this should occur, stop the exercise immediately. This counts for every exercise.

Try carefully moving your right ear to your right shoulder, make sure your shoulder doesn't come up. Feel the stretch in your neck and keep it there for about 8 seconds, then release. Do this exercise 3 times.

Tip 4: Stretch exercise for the neck muscles 2

Make circling movements with your shoulders. First 15 seconds forward, then 15 seconds backward. Make slow movements. Try to feel stretch in your shoulders, neck and upper back when making forward movements. Try to feel stretch in your shoulders, the front of your neck and your chest muscles when making backward movements.



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