

Patient Information:

Upper Back Pain

COMMON CAUSES:

- ◆ Improper lifting, bending, or twisting motion
- ◆ Injuries due to sports, falls, car accidents
- ◆ Poor conditioning (muscle strength/tone) and overuse
- ◆ Poor posture; sitting at computer too long
- ◆ Coughing/sneezing—sudden overstretching of muscles
- ◆ Scoliosis

TREATING UPPER BACK PAIN:

Most cases of upper back pain are not serious and respond to simple treatments.

- ◆ If you suspect injury, stop activity immediately
- ◆ Apply ice. Wrap sealed ice pack in towel and apply to back for 20 minutes and repeat every 2-3 hours for the first 48-72 hours. If there has been an injury, apply the ice as soon as possible after the injury
- ◆ After the first 72 hours, heat can be applied. Stretching back muscles slowly after heating the muscle can help reduce stiffness
- ◆ Tylenol®, Aleve®, or ibuprofen may be taken. Follow package directions and take with food
- ◆ Continue or return to normal daily activities as tolerated
- ◆ Evaluate your computer posture and make adjustments. Look up "computer ergonomics" online for specific suggestions
- ◆ Headache is a common symptom of tight, sore muscles of the upper back and neck
- ◆ Avoid anything that significantly increases back pain

In most cases back pain progressively improves over a course of 1-2 weeks without further intervention. During recovery, exercise with caution to prevent re-injury.

SEE YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:

- ◆ Back pain was caused by serious injury, such as direct trauma.
- ◆ Back pain longer than one month
- ◆ Numbness that fails to resolve
- ◆ Fever, cough

REHABILITATION EXERCISES:

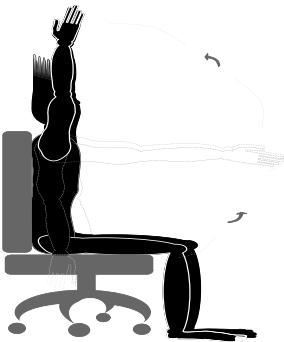
- ◆ **RECOVERY TAKES TIME.**
- ◆ Rehabilitation may take weeks or even months depending on severity of injury.
- ◆ Once initial pain has eased a rehabilitation program of upper back strengthening exercises and stretching is recommended to help prevent re-injury and pain.
- ◆ Do these exercises on a regular basis and you will see improvements in your posture, work endurance, and athletic performance. The exercises shouldn't irritate your back or neck when done properly. If there is pain, STOP.

For the exercises described on the following page:

unless otherwise stated, you should complete 1-3 sets comprised of 5-10 reps for each exercise.

Upper Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises

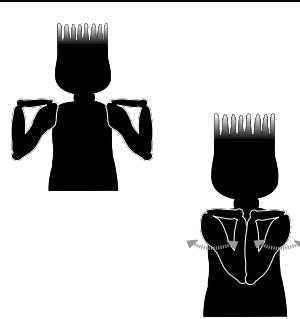
Cheer



EXERCISE:

Allow your arms to hang relaxed down at sides, and then raise them slowly upward over your head. Hold the stretch, before allowing your arms to slowly fall back to starting position.

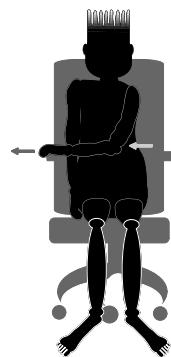
Butterfly



EXERCISE:

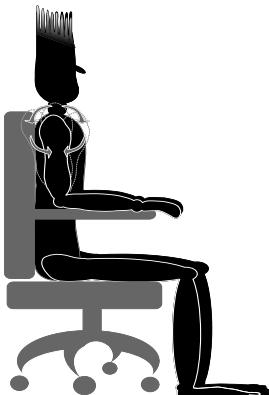
POSITION ONE: Place hands on shoulders with palms down
POSITION TWO: Keep hands in place and bring elbows as close together as possible until you feel a stretch in upper back. Hold, then return to position one.

Shoulder Stretch



EXERCISE: Hold on to one side of chair and slowly twist at waist to opposite side until you feel a stretch in middle of back. Hold and repeat with opposite side.

Shoulder Roll



EXERCISE: Roll shoulders forward in slow circular motion. Make large circles first and then reduce to smaller circles before reversing direction.

Shoulder Shrug



EXERCISE: Lift shoulders upwards towards your ears and hold. Return to relaxed position before repeating.

Neck Stretch



EXERCISE: Keep feet flat on the floor and lean your body forward as far as possible putting your head between your knees. Gently stretch your whole back before returning to upright position. Repeat.