# Leaflet 2 Management of Neck Pain

Following the onset of acute neck pain, the following advice should be followed:

If you need a collar, try to restrict its use to the first couple of days only.  Take it off regularly, to do the gentle exercises on the next sheet.

Taking painkillers **regularly** is very important at this early stage.  If your usual painkillers are not enough, your doctor can advise you.

Other ideas to help reduce the pain:

1.  An ice pack, e.g. frozen peas, wrapped in a damp towel and placed on the back of the neck for a maximum of 1 minute.  You can repeat this several times a day.

2.  You may find heat helpful.  You could use a wheat pack or a hot water bottle (make sure it has a cover).

3.  Sleep.  Use one or two pillows, whichever is more comfortable.  The top pillow should be soft to support your neck.  Lie on your back or your side.

### Exercise
The following exercises should be done 3 or 4 times a day.  Gradually increase the number of repetitions and try to regain your full range of movement as soon as you can.  It may be more comfortable to do some of the exercises lying down for the first few days.

Sitting on a hard-backed chair:

1.  Turn head slowly to look over left shoulder and then turn to look over right shoulder.
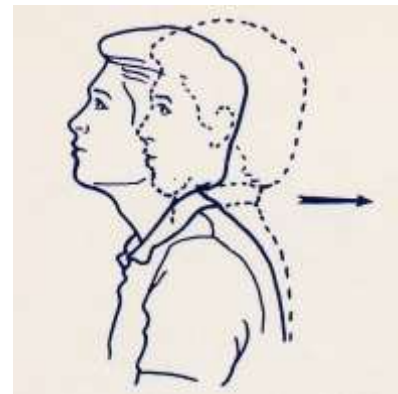
    Repeat 5 times

2   Tilt head towards shoulder slowly.
Return to the middle and repeat to
the other side.

Repeat 5 times

3.   Sitting with back supported, tuck chin to
chest as if making a 'double chin'.
Hold for the count of 3 seconds

Repeat 5 times

4.   Shrug shoulders up, back and around,
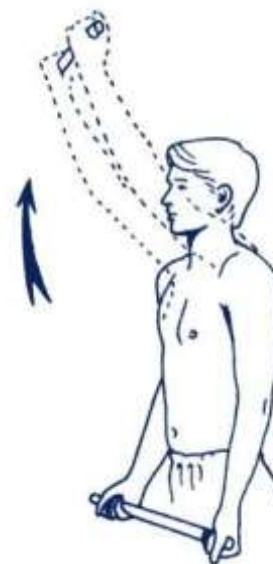then relax.

Repeat 5 times

5.  Stretch both hands overhead as high as possible.

    Repeat 5 times



6.  Sitting in a chair with your arms across your chest, turn your trunk to the right and hold for 5 seconds. Then turn to the left.

    Repeat 5 times each side