



## WESTWOOD MASSAGE NECK AND SHOULDER CARE

### Self trigger point Treatment (1)

- A great treatment if you have headaches or tight shoulders.
- You are looking for sore spots in the muscle, particularly those that re-create the pain you are experiencing.
- When you find a sore spot wait and hold until you feel the pain start to decrease.
- Go back to this point a couple of times until it is no longer tender on palpation.
- The pain you are experiencing from treating the trigger point should not be more than a 6 on a pain scale of 1-10. If the point is more painful than this you need to use less pressure



### Mobilisations

- Try to do the exercises several times a day (they will only take a few minutes).
- Aim to gradually increase the range of motion each time.
- These exercises are mobilizations so involve movement of the head

### Saying Yes (2)

- Nod the head up and down.
- Take the movement at a speed that feels OK for you



### Ear to Shoulder (3)

- Now take the ear to shoulder each side



### Saying No (4)

- Turn the head from side to side as if saying no.



## Static Stretches

- Hold the stretch from 15-30 seconds or even up to a minute
- Stretches can be done seated or standing
- These exercises are stretches so the head remains still once in position.

### Posterior Cervicals (The back of the neck) (5)

- Breathe in and then take the chin to the chest on the out breath.  
behind the head.



### Scalenes (6)

- Stabilise the opposite shoulder by putting one hand behind the back or sitting on the hands.
- Breathe in and out and take ear to shoulder.
- Wait and hold for 15-30 seconds.



### Levator scapulae (7)

- Turn the head 45 degrees and take the head to the left armpit.
- You can assist the stretch with the left hand on top of head.
- You can also sit on the right hand to prevent the shoulder raising up
- Wait and hold for 15-30 seconds



### SCM (8)

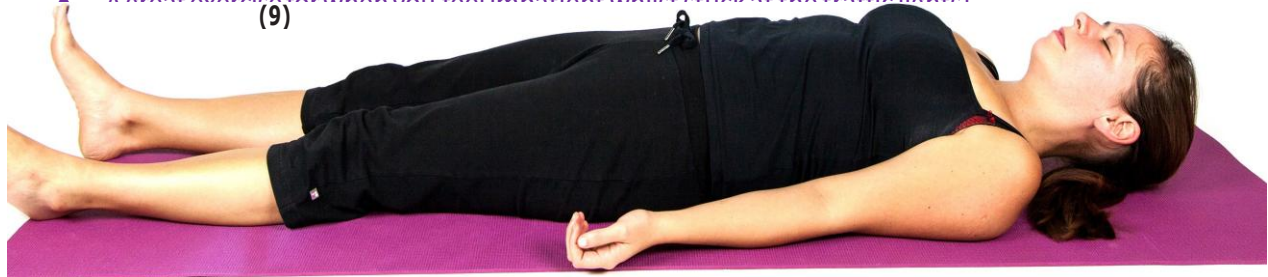
- Do the stretch seated.
- Rotate the head to look over your shoulder.
- You can assist the stretch with hand and sit on the other hand to prevent rotation of the trunk with the stretch.
- Wait and hold for 15-30 seconds.



## Relaxation and breathing exercises (9)

Research shows that mindfulness and meditation have a very positive effect on chronic pain conditions. Here are a few tips for a simple mindfulness of breathing exercise.

- Get in a comfortable position either seated with feet on the floor or lying on your back.
- Take their attention inwards and focus on the sensation of the breath in their body.
- The simplest relaxation technique is just to follow the breath as it flows in and out of the body. Follow the breath to a count of 10. When 10 is reached they can return to one and repeat.
- If you lose attention and your mind wanders just to come back to the focus on the breath and start again at the count of one.
- Just 5 minutes of this can be very powerful.
- The exercise can be practiced at any time of the day by just turning the attention inwards and following the breath.
- A great exercise for when you feel impatient whilst stuck at the traffic lights!



## Self treatment of Trigger Points

Using a ball or hands to self treat trigger points and generally work tight muscles can feel great! Here we use a spiky ball although a tennis ball or golf ball can also be effective.

### **Moving with the ball against the wall or on the floor**

- Place the ball between your body and a wall or your body and the floor

- By gently moving around you can enable the ball to work the areas of soreness – for example in the neck and shoulders.
- Feel free to work at your own pace and wait and hold on any tender areas.

**Heat** – Heat is best applied to new injuries after approximately 48 hours when the worst of the inflammation has subsided. For any long term muscular pain I would usually recommend heat over ice. Applying heat will bring fresh blood to the area which will bring with it oxygen and nutrients needed to heal and removal of waste products, it will also help to relax the muscles. Use either a hot water bottle or heat pad and apply the heat to the area ideally twice a day for at least 10 minutes at a time. Be careful not to burn the skin.

**Move** – Exercise will really help to stretch and strengthen the muscles and keep you more flexible and supple which in turn will help to reduce pain. Pilates is an excellent form of exercise and can really help with mobility. Find something you enjoy and build it up gradually, be it walking, swimming, cycling or whatever interests you. The human body is designed to move and ideally you should aim to be getting up and moving around every 20 minutes even if it is just a gentle walk around the house, anything is better than nothing. Exercise is the best tonic for most soft tissue conditions but only exercise within your capabilities if it is safe to do so. On the other side of the coin too much exercise can also be damaging so be mindful of not overdoing it.

**Posture** – So many soft tissue problems come from poor posture. Now days so many of us spend a lot of time sat at a desk looking at a computer or on our phones or I-pads. This encourages the poor posture we see today in so many people, rounded shoulders, shortening across the Pecs (muscles in the chest) and head protruding forwards. Poor posture in any form can put pressure and imbalances on the muscular system and cause pain so whilst this is not an easy one as much as you can be mindful of your posture during the day, again Pilates can be a great to help with this.

**Overuse / Misuse** – Overuse is another very common cause of pain or injury , if this is the case then the best thing to do if it is possible is to take a break from the thing that is causing you pain, this can however be easier said than done, especially if it is you work that is causing the problem! If it is your leisure pursuit that is causing pain (i.e tennis players suffering with tennis elbow) then it may be worth considering cross training so trying a different sport or fitness regime instead for a while. This can either be done by cutting the activity out altogether and

doing something different instead or cutting down on the activity that is causing the pain and supplementing it with other things instead. Try this for 2-3 weeks to see if the injury/pain improves then gradually reintroduce the activity back in slowly.

**Stress** – It is estimated that stress causes up to 70% of all illness and disease, it can also have a really negative effect on the soft tissue of the body. When we are stressed the body will tense up, usually once the period of stress has passed the body will relax again but nowadays many of us are so busy and constantly rushing around that we are in a permanent state of stress and our body never has a chance to rest and recover. Try to slow down a bit (as much as is possible) and think about things you can do for a period of time every day to try and help reduce your stress levels whether this is meditation, Pilates, reading a book or going for a walk whatever works for you!

**Diet / Hydration** – ‘We are what we eat’ or so the saying goes. A healthy balanced diet and good hydration is so important to enable the body to remain in an optimum state of health. Carrying excess weight can put a huge strain on the body, not only the systems of the body such as the heart and lungs but also on the bones, joints and soft tissue. This can put added stress onto the body hence increasing pain especially in the back and knees. For more information go to <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

**Sleep** – The average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep a night to maintain good health. Ensuring you have a good mattress and pillows that really support you and keep your spine in a neutral position is very important to help with pain. If you are unsure if your mattress or pillows are suitable go to a bed specialist for advice. Sleeping with a pillow in-between the legs may also help to reduce back pain.

**Emotional Trauma / Anxiety / Depression** – All these factors can increase pain in the soft tissue of the body and constant pain can increase these conditions it becomes a vicious cycle. It is so important to deal with any of these issues not only to help with pain but also to improve your mental health, it is a crippling illness to suffer alone. Fortunately nowadays these are no longer taboo subjects and help is available. <https://www.mind.org.uk>