**Hunched Shoulders & Forward Head Posture Rehab**

*Do not do any strengthening exercises for 48 hours after treatment on your neck & shoulders.*

**Upper Crossed Syndrome (including forward head posture)** is an extremely common problem in the west, particularly in stressed individuals & office workers. This muscle imbalance also frequently occurs in tall people, large breasted women and insecure individuals. A ‘three pronged’ approach is needed to effectively treat this problem including massage/myofascial release/stretching on the hypertonic postural (tonic) muscles, strengthening on the weak/long ‘phasic’ muscles and postural re-education. Exercises to restraighten the spine into a more natural curve are also very helpful! This pathology can lead to, amongst other things, headaches, neck & shoulder pain and thoracic outlet syndrome (arm pain/numbness/pins & needles).

**Rehab Exercises (strengthening)**

- Do the head retraction (above) daily for the first 2-3 months. Do 10 head retractions per day, holding each for 10 seconds.
• Do 5 of each scapular retraction exercises daily for the first 2-3 months. Hold each for 10 seconds pulling your shoulder blades down your back (tucking them into your back pockets) to engage the weak lower trapezius.

• On the back extension you can put your feet against a wall for support. Put the ball in the groin to make the exercise harder! Do the back extension 3 x week for the first 2-3 months. Build from 10>20 rep’s and do 2 sets.

• Lat pull down can also be done by holding a folded theraband between hands and pulling arms back and down (as shown) till the elbow and shoulder are bent to 90 degrees. Do the lat pull down 3 x week for the first 2-3 months. Build from 10>20 rep’s and do 2 sets.
- Modified press ups: Against wall-KEEP ELBOWS/ARMS STRAIGHT. SLOWLY ease your torso towards and away from the wall using your shoulders. Put feet further from wall to increase difficulty! Do the press ups 3 x week for the first 2-3 months. Build from 10>20 rep’s and do 2 sets.
- If any strengthening exercises cause pain, try reducing the number of reps (eg.10>6) or doing the exercise WITHOUT resistance (theraband, weights). Also check with your therapist you are doing the exercise correctly or whether there is an easier alternative!

**Stretching**

![Stretching exercises diagrams](image)
• When stretching, hold each stretch for 30 seconds to allow the tissues time to adapt and lengthen. Repeat each stretch 2 x. Breath out and relax as you stretch, trying not to force the stretch and waiting for the muscle to lengthen.

• Try to correct your posture by keeping your chest open, head back and shoulders down. Keep your shoulder blades ‘tucked into your back pockets’ and imagine an ‘invisible cord’ pulling your head up to the ceiling.

• Try to develop an awareness of when you are tensing your shoulders (eg. When stressed, feeling low). Open your chest and relax them down.

• When working with computers, ensure you don’t stretch your head forwards towards the monitor or hunch your shoulders. Take any pain or headache as your body reminding you to correct your posture!

• Ensure you also do any extra stretches of strengthening exercises your therapist gives you as you may be tight/weak in other areas! Discontinue any exercises on the advice of your doctor or physiotherapist.

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