

Exercise one: Splenius capitis, levator scapuli, and others

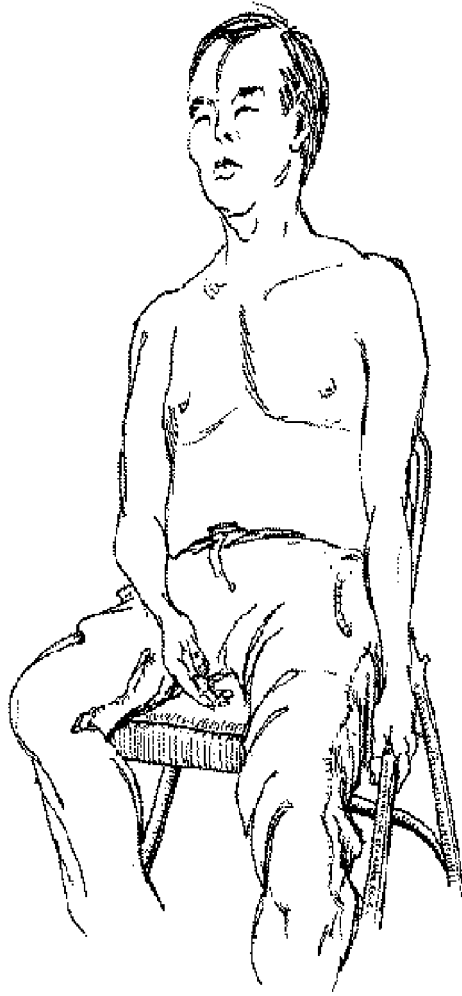
This exercise is designed to stretch and relax muscles running down the back of your neck on either side of your neck bones, as well as muscles connecting these bones to your shoulder blades. It may be useful for individuals who have a component of rotational torticollis plus retrocollis, as in the figure below:



In the figure above, the head is turned slightly left and backwards, and the muscles in the back of the neck on the left side are most active; the exercise below illustrates stretching of these left-sided muscles. If your head usually tends to turn toward your right and backwards as in the figure below then the muscles in the back of your neck on the right side are most active, and the procedure below needs to be reversed.

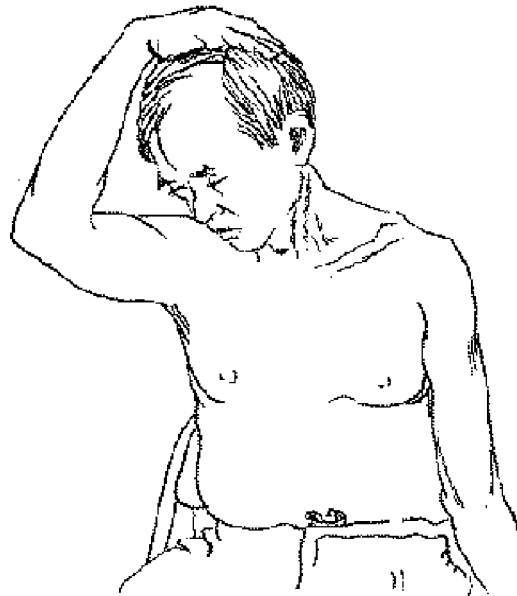


This exercise is performed in a seated position on a chair that allows you to grasp and hold underneath:



Alternatively, it can be performed in the standing position next to object that has a handhold at approximately the mid-thigh level.

Grasp the handhold with your left hand. Slowly lean your body forward and toward the right side, and at the same time allow your left shoulder to relax and be pulled downward while keeping your grip on the handhold. You may feel a pulling or stretching sensation deep in your shoulder muscles. Next turn your head about 45 degrees toward the right, and then tilt your head into a direction away from your left arm.



As you do this, feel the stretch in muscles of your shoulder and the back of your neck on the left side. Hold this position for 30 seconds. You may feel the sensation of stretch begin to subside. At this point, you may actually be able to stretch a little further. To make the stretch even more effective, reach behind for your head with your right hand and gently help pull along the direction of the stretch. Hold this position for another 10 seconds, then slowly release and relax.