

# Jaw and Neck Exercises



Always follow the instructions from your healthcare provider. This does not replace professional medical advice. Stop with any increase in pain or dizziness.

## Stretching your jaw

Normally you should be able to put **3 stacked fingers sideways** in your mouth. If you cannot do this, you may have jaw stiffness. You need to be able to open your mouth for eating, speaking, and dental care. The exercises below will help you prevent and improve jaw stiffness. Your surgeon may have special instructions depending on the type of surgery you had.

For each of the exercises, practice with good posture (see next page for tips). Doing these exercises in front of a mirror can help. Do these exercises for at least 1 year after your surgery or treatment.

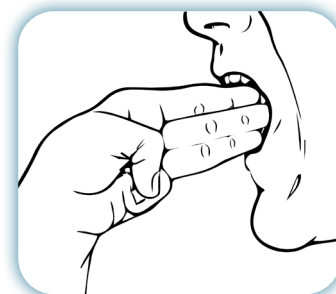


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### Follow these instructions **without causing pain**:

- **Hold for 5 seconds** before slowly returning to your normal position.
- Do these exercise 5 times each, 3 different times of the day.

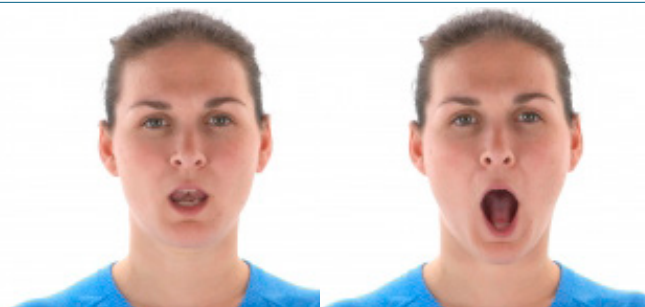
#### Jaw Stretches Side to Side

- Keep your teeth slightly apart.
- Slide your bottom teeth sideways to the right.
- Slide your bottom teeth sideways to the left.



#### Jaw Opening

- Lower your jaw as far as possible to feel a big stretch.



#### Jaw Protrusion (move forward)

- Keep your jaw slightly open.
- Slide your bottom jaw forward as far as it is comfortable.



## Stretching your neck

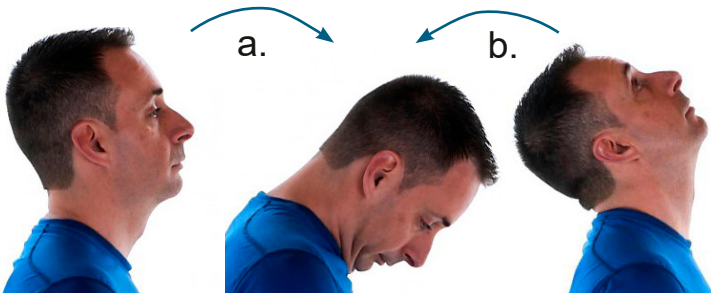


Neck stiffness is common after surgery, but is even more of a problem after radiation treatment. You may notice that it is more difficult to turn or tip your head, or look up at the ceiling.

The exercises below will help you to keep your neck from getting stiff. A rehab therapist can show you how to do them properly. Always practice good posture. Do these exercises for at least 1 year after your surgery or treatment.

**For Good Posture:** Neck, jaw and shoulder muscles work better when they are in proper alignment. For good posture during all your exercises, keep the shoulders back and down, chin slightly tucked in, and neck and back straight.

**For each of the exercises, do the following without causing pain:**

- **Hold for 5 seconds** before slowly returning to your normal position.
- Do these exercise 5 times each, 3 different times of the day.

<p><b>Tipping Your Head Back and Forth</b></p> <p>a. Bend your head forward until you feel a stretch behind your neck.</p> <p>b. Tip your head back to look up to the ceiling.</p> <p><b>Stop if you feel dizzy or nauseous for either of these.</b></p>	
<p><b>Tilting Your Head to the Side</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tip your ear towards your shoulder until you feel a stretch at the side of your neck without pain.</li> <li>• Tip your ear to the other side.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Head Turn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch.</li> <li>• You should be able to see behind you.</li> <li>• Turn your head to the other side.</li> </ul>	

## Posture exercise

### Shoulder Blade Squeeze

- This exercise helps to improve your posture and movement in your shoulders.
- Standing or sitting, tuck your chin slightly and keep your back and spine tall.
- With your arms relaxed on your sides, gently squeeze your shoulder blades together. Make sure you do not lift or shrug your shoulders.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Gently relax the position.
- Repeat throughout the day



⚠ Move as far as you can go without pain or pinching

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## Stretching your shoulders



**If you had surgery, do these important shoulder exercises.**

The exercises below will be reviewed with you (around 6-8 weeks after your surgery), when you are seen by a Rehabilitation Oncology Physiotherapist. You can start these shoulder exercises depending on how well you are healing. If you had a back flap, you may need to wait longer before starting these exercises. You may want to put a small, thin pillow or folded towel under your head and neck for comfort.

### Active Shoulder Flexion

- Lay down on your back on a firm surface, with your legs bent to protect your lower back.
- If needed, hold onto a wand (cane, ski pole, broomstick), with palms facing down and bring your arms over your head.
- Hold at the top for 10-30 seconds.
- Relax. Slowly bring your arms back to your sides.
- Repeat 5 times.



⚠ Move as far as you can go without pain or pinching

### Winging

- Lay down on your back on a firm surface, with your legs bent to protect your lower back.
- With your hands by your ears, bring your elbows together.
- Hold elbows together for 5 seconds.
- Drop your elbows down toward the floor and hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Repeat 5-10 times.



⚠ Move as far as you can go without pain or pinching

### Shoulder Girdle Mobilization

- Lay down on your back with your knees bent at 90 degrees and your feet flat.
- Rest your arms at your sides.
- Keeping your arms by your sides, shrug your shoulders towards your ears and slowly lower back to starting position.
- Repeat 5-10 times.



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