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Forward Head Posture Exercises

9 exercises that may help improve neck and shoulder movement and support a comfortable posture

Forward-Head

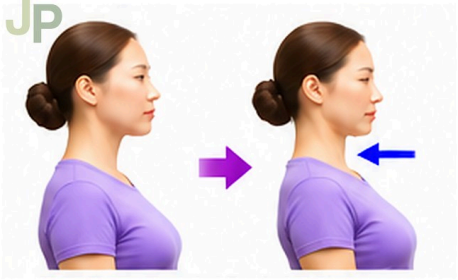
Forward head posture means the head sits forward of the shoulders. It adds load to the neck and shoulders and may be linked to pain, stiffness, and fatigue.

Precautions

- Stop right away if pain gets worse during an exercise.
- Stop right away if numbness or tingling spreads into your arm or hand.
- Never force a movement — move slowly and gently.
- Start with fewer reps and build up gradually.
- During the doorway stretch, if the front of your shoulder hurts or your arm tingles, lower your arms.

How often & everyday posture tips

- Do these once a day, at least 3–5 days a week.
- Set the top of your monitor at or slightly below eye level, about 20–28 inches (50–70 cm) away.
- Raise your phone toward eye level instead of looking down for long periods.
- Every hour, take 1–2 minutes to gently move your neck and shoulders.
- When sitting, sit tall and let your shoulders relax down.



1 Chin Tuck — basic posture reset

1. Sit or stand tall and look straight ahead.
2. Draw your chin straight back, as if making a double chin.
3. Do not tip your head down or tilt it back.

Hold 5 sec · 10 reps · 1–2 sets



2 Deep Neck Flexor Exercise (lying down)

1. Lie on your back with your head resting comfortably.
2. Breathing easily, gently tuck your chin (a small nod) to engage the deep muscles at the front of the neck.
3. Keep your head on the surface and don't let the surface neck muscles strain.

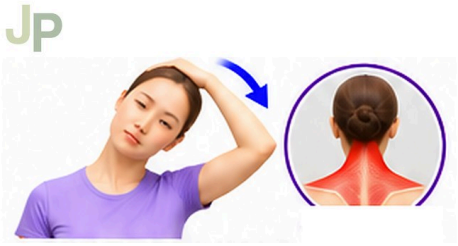
Hold 10 sec · 10 reps (start with 5 sec if needed) · 1–2 sets



3 Doorway Pectoral Stretch

1. Stand in a doorway with elbows bent about 90° and forearms and palms on the frame.
2. Keeping your hands and forearms in place, slowly step your body forward to stretch the chest.
3. Hold where you feel a stretch across the front of the chest.

Hold 20–30 sec · 2 reps



4 Upper Trapezius Stretch

1. Let one shoulder relax down.
2. Tilt your head to the other side and rest that hand over the opposite ear; let just the weight of your hand gently draw your head down.
3. Feel the stretch along the opposite side of the neck and shoulder.
4. Repeat on the other side.

Hold 20–30 sec · 2 reps each side



5 Levator Scapulae Stretch

1. Let one shoulder relax down.
2. Turn your head about 45° away from the side you are stretching, then bow your head diagonally down toward that armpit.
3. Feel the stretch at the side of the neck and top of the shoulder blade (levator scapulae).
4. Repeat on the other side.

Hold 20–30 sec · 2 reps each side



6 Thoracic Extension

1. Sit in a chair with your upper back (mid-back) against the backrest.
2. Place both hands lightly behind your head.
3. Slowly open your chest and extend your upper back over the backrest.
4. Don't overarch your neck or low back.

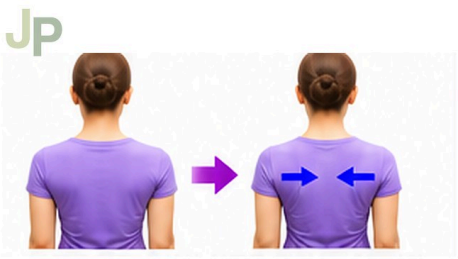
8–10 reps · 1–2 sets

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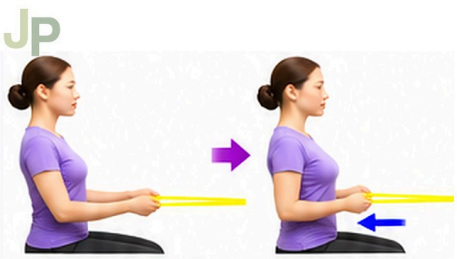
Forward-Head



7 Scapular Retraction

1. Sit or stand tall with your shoulders relaxed.
2. Gently squeeze both shoulder blades back and together.
3. Don't push your chest out too far; keep breathing easily.
4. Don't let your shoulders shrug up.

Hold 5 sec · 10 reps · 1–2 sets



8 Resistance Band Row

1. Anchor a resistance band in front of you and hold one end in each hand.
2. Pull your elbows back along your sides and squeeze your shoulder blades together.
3. Don't let your shoulders shrug up.

10–12 reps · 2 sets



9 Wall Angel

1. Stand with your back against a wall, lightly touching your head, upper back, and buttocks to it.
2. Place your elbows and the backs of your hands on the wall in a W shape.
3. Keeping the backs of your hands and elbows lightly on the wall, slowly slide them up, then back down.
4. Don't overarch your low back or shrug your shoulders.
5. If your head doesn't rest comfortably on the wall, don't force it — just keep a slight chin tuck.
6. Raise your hands only until they are about to come off the wall.

8–12 reps · 1–2 sets

Get medical care if you notice:

- Ongoing neck or shoulder pain, arm numbness, or weakness
- Dizziness, blurred vision, or a headache that suddenly gets worse
- Neck pain right after a car accident or fall (get checked before starting)
- Sudden, severe headache, slurred speech, or face/arm weakness (call 911)

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These are simple, comfortable exercises for everyday home use, based on materials from respected medical organizations. For exercises tailored to your symptoms, talk with your healthcare provider. This material does not replace an individual medical evaluation.

Sources: Sheikhhoseini et al., J Manipulative Physiol Ther (2018); Harman et al., J Man Manip Ther (2005); Sepehri et al., BMC Musculoskelet Disord (2024); JOSPT Neck Pain Clinical Practice Guideline (2017). These organizations have not reviewed or endorsed this material. Illustrations created with AI.