

If these stretches cause any sharp pain, or aggravate your neck pain for longer than a day afterwards, follow the ice/heat advice below and contact the clinic.

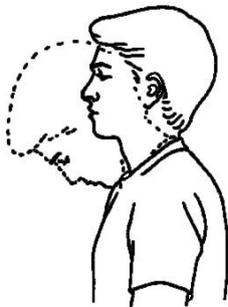
Stretches

Stretches should be held as long as you feel comfortable (short bursts if painful, and up to 30 seconds if comfortable) with at least **5-10 seconds rest** in between. **Do not bounce** at the end range as this may cause irritation.

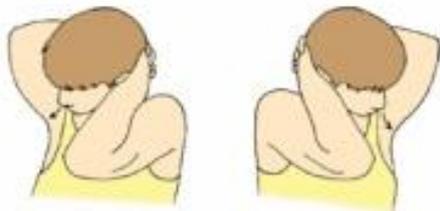
Stretches can be repeated as many times as preferable, however, if doing exercises and stretches, it is best to do the stretches after exercise as the muscles have warmed up.

Best to do these stretches seated, for balance purposes.

Parspinal Stretch

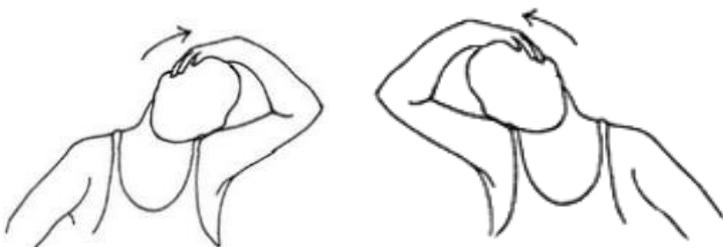


Take your chin slowly down towards you chest until you feel a stretch at the back of your neck. Occasionally if the muscles are very tight you can feel a pull between the shoulder blades and lower.



To emphasise the stretch more on one side you can rotate as shown, away from the side you want to stretch. For more of a stretch you can use one or both your hands on the back of your head to apply pressure, **not too hard** or you may strain the neck.

Upper Trapezius Stretch



Sit on your hand of the side you want to stretch to keep your shoulder low. With a light pressure use your other hand to pull your ear towards your shoulder until you feel a stretch at the side of your neck and over your shoulder.

Scalene Stretch



As above you can sit on your hands in order to keep your shoulders back and low. This time rotate to look over your shoulder and tip the head back slightly, until you feel the stretch as shaded in the diagram.

Alternative Neck stretch (help you find the spot)

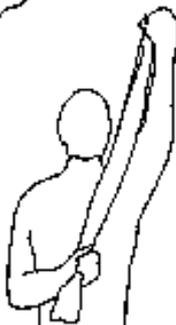


With the head dropped towards your chest, roll the head slowly from looking over one shoulder, to straight down, and then across to looking over the other shoulder. This allows you to find the really tight spots where you can hold the stretch for extra relief.

Towel Stretch

(good general shoulder stretch)

A



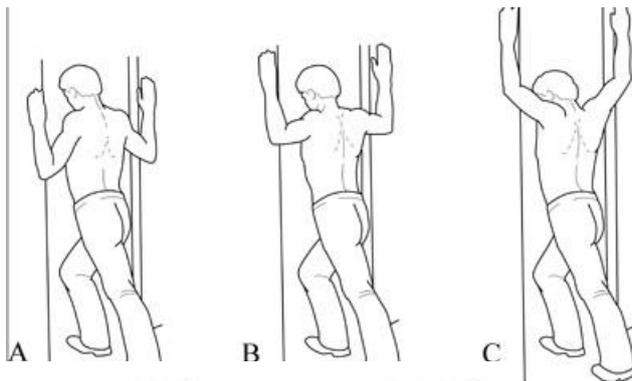
B



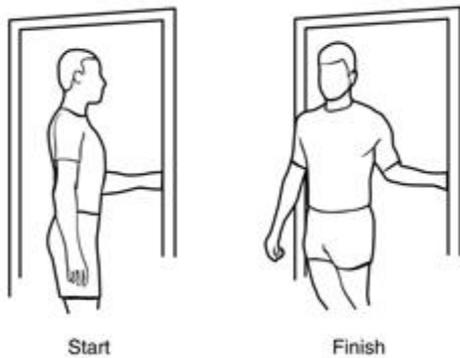
It is helpful to do this stretch in front of a mirror to observe position and posture. Grasp one end of the towel with your right hand. Drop the other end of the towel over your right shoulder so that the left hand can grasp the bottom of it behind your back. Move the hands along the towel towards each other as much as possible. Pull down with the left hand, stretching the right arm up. Hold this stretch as long as you are comfortable. Next raise the right arm as high as you can, pulling up the left hand towards the middle of your shoulder blades.

Repeat the stretch sequence on the opposite side.

Pectoral/Chest stretch

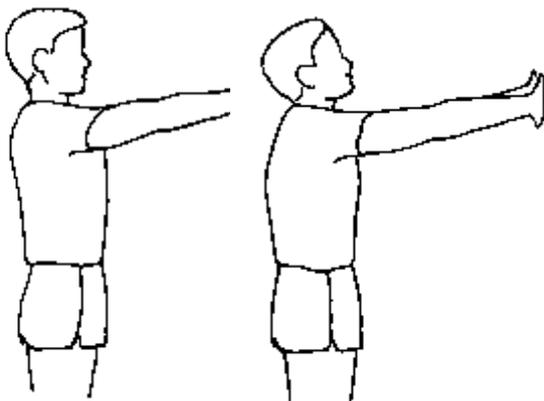


Stand with your forearms either side of a doorway. Gently lean forward until you feel a stretch across the front of the shoulders and chest. Move your hands up and down the frame to align different muscle fibres for a great overall chest stretch.



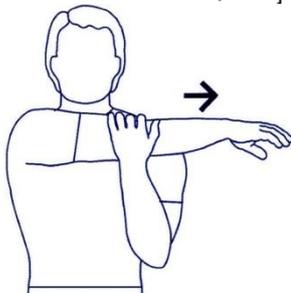
*Alternatively you can do one arm at a time. Gripping a door frame turn your body away from the arm you want to stretch. Try moving it up and down the frame to stretch different muscles of the chest as in A, B and C.

Rhomboid Stretch



Stand up straight take your shoulders back, trying to squeeze the shoulder blades together, and hold for 20 seconds. Then bring both arms out in front and both shoulders forward as far as you can. Once here push your hands forward more and try to have the shoulders touch each other in front and hold for a stretch.

*Whilst pushing forward you can move your hands up and down, side-to-side, to move where the stretch is felt.



* Alternatively do one arm at a time. Again move the hand up and down to find the right spot

For moments of acute pain/injury (first few weeks) it is best to apply an **ice pack** (bag of frozen peas etc), this will slow blood flow and in turn reduce inflammation and pain, hour. **Heat** does the opposite (increases blood flow) and is good for chronic joint pain

(arthritis) or muscular pain, using a hot water bottle or wheat bag. Both should be wrapped in kitchen towel/pillow case, to prevent direct contact with the skin, as that can cause heat or ice burns. Apply for **15-20 minutes** on the affected area/s, and this can then be repeated up to around **every 1 hour**. Both should feel comfortable, not painful, if this is the case the packs are either too hot/cold, and a thicker barrier should be used i.e. towel, until the temperature is comfortable but can still be felt.