

5 Exercises for Neck and Shoulder Pain

Regular exercise has been proven to reduce the risks of a number of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, certain forms of cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and neck and back pain, but despite all these positive benefits, most of us are 'Exercise Deficient'.

Shoulder, back and neck pain are common ailments reported in occupations with sedentary repetitive work patterns, however anyone can be afflicted with this condition. Complete the basic exercises below to help reduce your shoulder and neck pain and improve function and strength.

Equipment: You will need various weight dumbbells (buy as a set) and a mat or thick towel.

How to start: Begin with a 5 to 10 minute warm-up of light cardio (walking, jogging in place, skipping etc.). Perform one set of each exercise (12 repetitions) using suitable weights. When you are ready to progress, add 1 to 2 reps each week (building up to 25-30 reps); add sets and/or increase weight each week by about 5 to 10% (when you are ready).

Do this workout 2 to 3 non-consecutive days a week, performing cardio exercise on the days in between. Ensure that you stretch afterwards.

Shoulder Elevation

Start by standing with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. The dumbbells should be held at your side with your palms facing in.

Exhale and lift your shoulders straight up in a slow motion, keeping your arms straight. Hold for 2-3 seconds. Inhale and slowly lower shoulders to starting position.



Shoulder Abduction

Stand with feet slightly apart, and your back straight. Your arms should be hanging at your sides about a foot away from your body. Face your palm inwards holding a dumbbell in each hand.

As you exhale, raise the dumbbells at your sides, keeping your elbows slightly bent. Continue to raise dumbbells until they are level with your shoulders. Inhale and lower arms slowly to the starting position. This complete one rep. To make exercise easier, bend elbows more.



One-Arm Row

Stand with one knee on a bench (or low table) and place same-side hand on the table in front of the knee. Brace the stomach muscles, and with your other hand, pull the weight up towards your lower chest.

When the weight touches your chest, lower it in a controlled motion.



Reverse Fly

Stand with your torso bent forward, making a 90 degree angle between your legs and upper body. Grasp dumbbells in your hands at your sides, palms facing inwards. Lean over so your chest is slightly above your knees.

Inhale and raise your arms to your sides, keeping your arms straight but not locking your elbows. Continue to lift until the weights are at shoulder level. Hold for 2-3 seconds, exhale and slowly lower weights back to starting position.



Upright Row

Stand with your feet hip-width apart and your knees slightly bent, and hold a pair of dumbbells close together in front of you, palms facing your thighs.

Lift the dumbbells up towards your chin, leading the motion with your elbows and keeping your shoulders down and back. When the weights reach your collarbone, slowly reverse the motion to come back to the start. Repeat.

