Trapezius strain exercises pdf

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Medically reviewed by Daniel Bubnis, M.S., NASM-CPT, NASE Level II-CSS, Fitness — Written by Gretchen Stelter — Updated on September 29, 2018Ear to shoulderCrocodile poseCobra poseCat-Cow poseWide-leg forward fold Your trapezius musclesYou may wonder what, exactly, your trapezius is — or maybe not, since you're reading this.Most people have a vague idea that it's part of their shoulders and neck in some way and know they need to loosen it. But they aren't necessarily clear what it does.To be specific, it's part of your shoulder girdle. It's responsible for moving and rotating your shoulder blade, stabilizing your arm, and extending your neck. Basically, it does a lot of work, making it an easy place for stress and tension to land. This is especially true of the upper part of the trapezius in your lower neck.To loosen and ease this muscle, you need to do a little shoulder work, a little neck work, and a little upper back work.You can start off sitting or standing, but as part of this series, sitting on the ground, on a mat, is recommended.Share on PinterestSlowly and with ease, take your right ear toward your right shoulder. It's natural for your left shoulder to lift as you do this. If that happens, ease your head back toward center until you can relax your left shoulder back down.Lift your right hand up and over your head, resting your hand on your left cheekbone. Do not pull on your head now, though. Simply rest your hand there for just slightly more pressure. This very gently stretches your upper trapezius.Breathe as you sit here for at least 30 seconds.Gently release this side, and then ease your left ear toward your left shoulder and complete the stretch on the other side, breathing deeply through it.This move can be uncomfortable at first. It may feel odd to relax facedown, but if you breathe slowly and let go, this can really help ease your trapezius.Lie down on your stomach with your feet shoulder-width apart, and rest your hands one on top of the other under your chin.When you're in place, lie flat and rest your forehead on your stacked hands. This will actually release lower back compression as well, but the main thing you want to visualize and focus on here is lengthening your spine and releasing any tension in your upper back and neck.Breathe deeply and try to relax here. This pose releases tension in your lower neck and trapezius and stretches your throat. It also increases flexibility in your spine and strengthens your back and arms, helping prevent future trapezius issues.Lift your head and place your hands on the floor next to your shoulders, keeping your arms parallel and your elbows close to your body. Press the tops of your feet into the floor and inhale deeply as you begin to lift your head and chest. If possible, straighten your arms and keep in mind that straightening them completely will arch your back quite a bit.Whether you lift all the way to straight arms or not, keep in mind that you want your neck and head (cervical spine) to be on the same curve. You will lift your head as well, but you want to simply ease it up.Check your chin. It's incredibly common to jut your chin out in this pose and let your shoulders creep up toward your ears, so take a moment to roll your shoulders back and down, pulling your shoulder blades closer together as you pull your torso through your upper arms, and ease your chin back.Hold this for a few breaths and release on an exhale.Inhale as you lift into this pose at least two more times, holding it for a little bit longer each time.This move relieves tension in your cervical spine and stretches your back muscles as well as the front of your torso. Keep in mind that when using this pose specifically for your trapezius, you want to focus on the area right between your upper shoulder blades, alternately arching and releasing your neck.Push up onto all fours, into a tabletop position. Your hips should be directly over your knees, your shoulders over your elbows, and your elbows over your wrists.As you inhale, lift your head, chest, and sitting bones, letting your belly sink, and arching your back.As you exhale, round your spine toward the sky and release your head into the Cat pose.Continue taking deep breaths, moving with your breath as you do, inhaling as you arch your back and exhaling as you round your back.This pose decompresses your spine, strengthens your upper back and shoulders, and lengthens and eases your neck muscles.Push to standing and, keeping your feet parallel, widen your stance to approximately a leg's length. With your hands on your hips, release your torso and slowly bend forward, keeping all four corners of your feet rooted. If you feel unstable in this pose, bend your knees slightly and release your hands to the ground, shoulder-width apart.After you feel full rooted in this forward bend, interlace your hands behind your back, hug your shoulder blades in, and release your hands toward the floor. Last medically reviewed on January 19, 2018 Do you ever feel tightness in your neck and shoulders toward the end of the day? Have you had a headache after working on your computer or phone too long? Our posture has a lot to do with the function of our neck, or cervical muscles. If these muscles are misaligned or fatigued throughout the day, pain or stiffness may result. Let us look at two common misalignments causing neck pain: our head and shoulders positioning. Forward Head Posture This is a common postural compensation that happens with extended periods of computer work, driving, and phone usage. The sternocleidomastoid muscle pulls the head forward causing the suboccipitals muscles to rest in extension. The levator scapulae muscles and semispinalis capitis become stressed and overworked. The suboccipitals, specifically the rectus capitis posterior, becomes fatigued from trying to keep the head and eyes "in line". These muscles develop trigger points which can refer pain such as headaches, jaw pain, and neck pain. Rounded Shoulders Posture Sitting posture affects the neck as described above, as well as the shoulders, chest, and thoracic spine. Slumping creates a rounded shoulders posture that contributes to neck pain and stress. The muscles that are commonly tight in this posture are the pec major, pec minor, and upper trapezius. The muscles that are typically weak are the rhomboids, middle trapezius, and lower trapezius muscles. Tightness and trigger points in the upper trapezius muscle are found to be one of the leading causes of headaches. Below we will discuss 6 exercises to help reduce strain on these muscles and improve your posture to prevent strain and pain in these muscles. The overall goal of these exercises is to stretch the muscles that are tight and re-educate the muscles that are weak. These two strategies will facilitate proper posture and endurance of proper posture. Corner Pec Stretch Forward rounded shoulders are a big culprit for strain on the cervical muscles. The pectoral muscles across the chest can become tight after slouching for extended periods of time. Taking a break during the day to perform a corner pec stretch will take some of the strain off of your neck. The different positions help to stretch the various muscle fibers of the pec muscle. Choose a position, whichever feels the most tight, and lean into the stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 3-5 times. Chin Tuck Another aspect of posture and the forward rounded head position is that the upper neck, or craniovertebral spine, is forced into extension. To prevent this position, re-education of the deep cervical flexor muscles is important. For this exercise lay on your back, tuck your chin toward your chest, imagine an axis through the ears. Try not to use the sternocleidomastoid muscle on the side of the neck. Hold the tuck for 5 seconds, repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Upper Trapezius Stretch Sitting at a computer for longer than 30 minutes can cause tightness and trigger points in the upper trapezius muscle. Taking a break for an upper trap stretch can be helpful to prevent headaches. It may be helpful to set an alarm throughout the day to stop and do this stretch. 30 seconds 3-5 times per side. Wall Clocks In addition to stretching, it is important to re-educate the muscles that facilitate proper posture. The wall clock exercise works several of the mid-back muscles that support posture. Reach to each corner and middle position, touching 6 points around the clock is 1 repetition. Repeat 5 repetitions for 3 sets. Try to maintain proper neck and shoulder position while doing this exercise. Do not hunch the shoulders up, keep the neck in a slight chin tuck. Lower Trap Lift Off This exercise is helpful to re-educate the mid-back muscles, specifically the lower trapezius. We discussed that his muscle gets weak with rounded shoulders. This exercise will also facilitate a little bit of thoracic extension. Arms overhead on the wall in a Y position. Make sure not to hunch your shoulders towards your ears. Lift your arms away from the wall, however much range you have available. Slowly return arms to the wall. Bonus points if you can maintain a slight chin tuck. Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Foam Roller: Thoracic Extension This stretch or mobilization is helpful to get out of the rounded shoulders position. While sitting in a slumped position, the thoracic spine sits in flexion. This position helps to reinforce thoracic extension. Sometimes you will feel a couple of pops, those are joints clicking back into place. Hold the head so that it does not fall back into extension and support the neck muscles. Roll up and down the thoracic spine 10-15 times. Make sure you do not hold your breath. Neck Pain or Injury Treatment Near You Do not let that pain in your neck slow you down! Here at IMPACT Physical Therapy, our clinicians will be able to assess your cervical and thoracic mobility and will work with you to address and treat your issues so you can get back to feeling your best. Our dedicated clinicians can effectively treat a variety of cervical injuries, and we also provide many other physical therapy and performance services. Contact us at one of our seven Illinois locations to learn more or to schedule a session!

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