

Neck Exercises for Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery



Neck pain and stiffness is common following thyroid surgery. The neck is composed of vertebrae, ligaments that supply stability to the spine and muscles that provide support and allow motion. The neck is very vulnerable because it is less protected than the rest of the spine, it supports the head and it is very flexible. During your surgery the neck is extended (bent backwards) for the duration of the procedure which may be for several hours. This can cause muscle spasm which then leads to pain and tension in the neck. People with pre-existing neck problems such as cervical spondylosis or a previous whiplash injury are more susceptible. Exercising the neck muscles before and after your surgery significantly reduces the risk of muscle strain and subsequent neck strain. You should perform the following exercises **for 10 counts each, twice daily, for 10 days before and 10 days after** your surgery. Exercise should be done until a gentle tension is felt. Do not bounce or the muscles will tighten up more. It is important to return to the central position.

NECK EXERCISES

Flexion/Rotation (sternocleidomastoid)



Tuck chin to chest. Rotate to left, then center, then right. Repeat 10 times.

Flexion/Extension (posterior neck muscles)



Tuck chin to chest. Feel stretch in back of neck, then push back (extension) as far as possible. Repeat 10 times

Lateral Side Bends (scalenes and upper trapezius)



Place head to right side. Can use right hand to add extra stretch. Lowering left shoulder will also intensify stretch. Hold 10 counts, return head to center and repeat on other side. Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder Shrugs (trapezius and levator scapulae)



Elevate shoulders to neck. Hold 10 counts. Relax and repeat 10 times.