

Whiplash (Neck Sprain)

What is it?

Sudden flexion and/or extension of the neck, resulting in injury to potentially multiple soft tissues in the neck

What causes it?

A direct force or collision from the front or the rear. Direct blow to the head.

Symptoms

Pain and sometimes a burning sensation. Muscle tension and tightness. Stiffness in upper back, neck and shoulders. Restricted range of movement.

Rehab

Once symptoms have lessened, gentle physical therapy to help with mobility and strength.

How to Treat it

Rest, ice, compress, elevate, refer for medical advice (RICER).
Neck brace. Anti-inflammatories, muscle relaxants and painkillers.



Top Tips

Seek medical treatment as soon as possible, even in mild cases. The severity of symptoms being experienced can increase quickly. Asking for appropriate medications from your GP is advised. This is an injury which can have long lasting symptoms and may require regular maintenance treatment. Keeping up with these treatments is important. Seek advice on an exercise programme.

Definitions

Sprain – an overstretch or tear in the ligaments

Ligament – short band of tough, fibrous connective tissue, connecting bones and joints

Flexion – a movement that decreases the distance between two body parts

Extension – a movement that increases the distance between two body parts

Soft Tissues – connective tissues/support structures such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, nerves etc

RICER – Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate, Refer

Associated Conditions

- Neck Strain,
- Cervical Nerve Stretch Syndrome/Burner Syndrome,
- Wryneck/Acute Torticollis,
- Slipped Disc/Acute Cervical Disc Disease,
- Pinched Nerve,
- Spur Formation (Cervical Spondylosis)

Get Help Now

Products

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References: The Anatomy of Sports Injuries by Brad Walker, Anatomy & Physiology by Louise Tucker and Google.com