

# 5 Physical Therapy Tips to Eliminate Chronic Neck Pain

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According to the [American Osteopathic Association](#), chronic neck pain affects over 25 percent of the American population. Regardless of its cause, chronic neck pain can be debilitating and can negatively affect a patient's quality of life. It can also contribute to other ailments, including headaches and upper back pain.

Physical therapy under the guidance of a licensed professional can be an effective treatment for chronic neck pain. However, there are additional activities you can perform that will enhance your [physical therapy treatment and help with managing your neck pain](#). These tips can provide immediate relief and have long-lasting results.

## Heat and Cold Therapy

**Heat should be applied to your neck before exercising to help relax stiff muscles.** You can apply dry heat, such as an electrical heating pad, or you can use moist heat, which is applied using steamed towels or moist heating packs. No matter what product you use, it only needs to have a warm temperature to penetrate beneath the skin and reach the neck muscles. Generally, the longer the heat is applied, the better it will work.

**Cold therapy is generally used after an exercise routine to slow the circulation of blood enough to lessen inflammation and pain.** Common products can include iced compresses or cold packs. Cold therapy has to be applied only a short while to be effective.

## Neck Stretches and Exercises

**The most effective neck exercise programs will involve a combination of stretching and strengthening exercises.** It is recommended that strengthening exercises, which can help with posture, should be limited to every other day so that the muscles have enough time to restore themselves. Stretching exercises, which can help reduce stiffness and enhance the flexibility of the neck, can be completed daily, multiple times a day in some cases.

## Over-the-Counter Pain Relievers

Chronic neck pain can also be managed with the proper use of over-the-counter pain relievers. Specifically, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin, can lessen the inflammation of muscles and reduce pain. If you have questions about which medication is appropriate, you should consult your physician, especially if you are taking other medicine.

## Ergonomics

Ergonomics, which focuses on using the human body efficiently and safely to perform an activity, can be particularly effective in managing neck pain while in the workplace. It is often a simple matter of the correct placement. Some ergonomic tips to keep in mind include:

- Making an effort to always [maintain proper posture when walking, lifting or standing](#).
- Adjusting your chair so that both feet are flat on the ground and the lumbar region of your back is supported
- Positioning the computer monitor so that your head is directly over your spine and does not have to tilt or hang to view the screen clearly

## Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)

TENS is a device that allows the safe application of electrical currents to stimulate muscles and reduce pain. There are multiple devices available, including smaller versions for use within the comfort of your own home. Neck pain caused by multiple conditions can benefit from this type of treatment.

[Read more about pain relief with TENS](#)

## Consult a Physical Therapist before Starting Treatment

It is necessary that you speak with a licensed physical therapist before you begin any type of treatment for your neck pain. During an in-depth consultation, you will be able to:

- Obtain a proper diagnosis and cause for the neck pain, which can determine the type of exercises or treatment that will be most effective
- Receive guidance regarding how to exercise with the correct form

At Advanced Back and Neck Care, we have dedicated and experienced healthcare professionals who can create a personalized plan of treatment that can help alleviate your chronic neck pain. [Call us today and schedule an appointment](#). We can provide you with what you need to effectively manage your pain.

## Dr. David Voyer

Advanced Back and Neck Care is dedicated to helping you achieve your wellness objectives -- combining skill and expertise that spans the entire wellness spectrum. You will find the main entrance to our state of the art Physical Therapy, Chiropractic, Medical Massage, and Strength training facility.

