



Dulwich Hill Chiropractic  
& Therapeutic Centre

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# 3 reasons my neck may be stiff and sore

***Understanding what the neck is and does is an important part of understanding how and why things happen in this area.***

***The neck or cervical region is comprised of a series of joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves. It also houses your oesophagus, wind pipe, your voice box, and major veins and arteries. It is such an intricate area as it supports the head and is the initial pathway of the spine and nervous system. So in other words it carries a great burden, and we don't look after it adequately enough.***

***So keeping this in mind let's look at 3 reasons this complex part of your body gets stiff and sore.***

## **Forward Head carriage.**

This is directly related to bad posture. Your neck supports your head which weighs approximately 3 kilos and when that weight is shifted beyond the ideal position the joints and muscles at the back of your neck have to compensate and work overtime to support the weight. This will lead to stiffness and create that soreness that we all hate.

## **Poor sleeping habits.**

In what position do you sleep at night? Are you sleeping with a pillow? These are important questions as it tell you a lot about your sleeping habits. If you are sleeping on your belly, with or without a pillow, this is an automatic no no. Your neck lays in an awkward

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position, which can inhibit nerve transmission and blood flow.

It also creates a twist and curvature in the cervical spine compressing the joints and straining the muscles. Sleeping on your side or back without a supportive pillow will lead to the same problems encountered when sleeping on your belly except it affects the spine, nerves, blood flow, and muscles just in a different position. These will lead to cramps, stiffness and soreness either through the night or when you wake up due to the neck again not resting in an ideal position.

### **Stress.**

When we stress our body naturally tenses up. So the old saying goes, your carry weight on your shoulders. This is because you naturally tense up and raise your shoulders when you start to feel stressed or anxious. When your shoulders stiffen up it then causes a restriction in your neck muscles and joints. People also complain of feeling tense in there windpipe or oesophagus. When your muscles and joints are restricted it leads to stiffness and soreness in those muscles.

### **So where from here?**

Well it's quite easy.

If you feel you have forward head carriage, the first thing to do is look at ways of improving your posture.

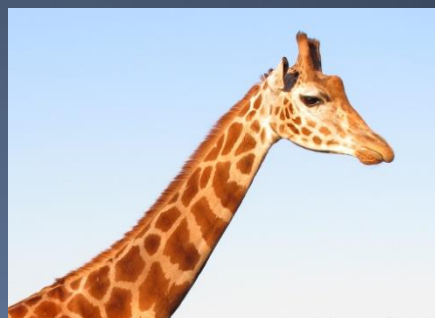
This may include, ensuring your ears are in line with your shoulders. Conduct back and shoulder strengthening exercises. Stretch on a regular basis. Improve the way you sit in front of a computer or television.

If you feel you have poor sleeping habits, you should start with making sure your environment is adequate. So make sure you have a firm supportive bed. Make sure your pillow supports the curve of your neck. You should then ensure you are sleeping on your back or side. If on your back, place a pillow under your knees, or a pillow between the knees on your side.

If you feel you stress too much or get anxious frequently, look for ways to deal with things better. This may include, taking time out for yourself on a daily basis, exercise, and a healthy diet. Ensure you have a good balance of work rest and play, at most importantly, **KEEP SMILING!**

If you are doing all the right things and you still feel your neck is stiff and sore, consult a health professional, like a chiropractor or massage therapist. They both have proven results in relieving neck pain. They can also recommend things you can do or nutrients you should take to deal with your stiffness/soreness better.

**FUN FACT: ALTHOUGH A GIRAFFES NECK IS 1.5-1.8M IN LENGTH, IT CONTAINS THE SAME NUMBER OF VERTEBRAE AS A HUMAN NECK**



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