

Collar your 'tech neck'

The simplest stretch can ease stiffness

Ashleigh Gleeson

If you look at your phone multiple times a day or sit at a computer for work then one simple move can help avoid the growing issue of "tech neck".

Kieser exercise scientist Deb Lawrence said she was seeing people as young as 16 with neck pain problems from mobile phone and screen use.

Meanwhile, sports physiotherapist Shaun Rodgers regularly comes across older people who are unable to check their blind spots while driving due to neck stiffness.

This week in the *Get Your Body Right* series we're aiming to help prevent this and also upping the ante with a harder version of a previous exercise.

To stop getting a sore neck and tension headaches from looking at your phone or screen all day, try doing a chin tuck, or neck flexion, outlined in the program.

"Anyone over the age of 16, I will see (neck problems); it's so common, because they are looking at their phones and laptops at school," Ms Lawrence said.

"If you don't have good vision, you lean forward."

"The long-term consequence is you can change the posture of your neck."

"(The chin tuck) can really help with some different types of neck pain and help break up office work."

Mr Rodgers, who works at Melbourne Sports Physio, said the chin tuck was an effective exercise he often gave clients.

"It stretches the muscles at the back of the neck and you get a little bit of strengthening at the front of the neck," he said. "I definitely see a lot of people within our working population with neck pain, usually desk-based jobs and prolonged screen time."

"What we find in the older population is they have more stiffness in the morning, they commonly report the first 10 to 15 minutes out of bed is quite stiff and they feel like they have limited range of motion where they feel like they can't look over each shoulder."

"The comment I often hear is 'when I'm driving I can't check my blind spot'."

"That's very achievable to improve those symptoms."

Meanwhile, to add some challenge to your core routine, we have increased the difficulty with a back extension,



SCAN



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WEEK FOUR

WALK:

Try to reach 6500 steps a day, or 45 minutes of walking, when factoring in incidental movement.

NEW EXERCISES:

BEGINNER: 8-12 repetitions

INTERMEDIATE: 20 repetitions

ADVANCED: Go beyond, until fatigued



LEAN BACK



CHIN TUCK

Stand with your back against the wall. Then softly push your neck back with only 20 per cent power. Hold for 10 to 20 seconds.

LEAN BACK

This will work your stomach muscles. Sit on the edge of a chair that's resting against a wall so it's safe. Cross your arms over your chest and keep your feet planted on the ground. With your core engaged, slowly lean back slightly. Hold for a second. Then rise again.

SIDE PLANK

Sit on your right side with your right forearm resting on the floor. Bend your knees slightly (right). Lift up your hips and hold for a few seconds. Then lower back down. Repeat on each side. **More advanced:** Extend your legs so when you raise your hips you are on your feet (which are pointing in the direction you're facing) instead of your knees.



LEG CYCLING

AIR CYCLES

This will work your abdominal muscles. Lie on your back, either on the floor or your bed. Put your legs up with your knees bent in a 90-degree angle. Cycle them like you would a bike for 30 seconds with your core engaged.



SIDE PLANK

BACK EXTENSION



SUPERMAN



BACK EXTENSION

This is increasing the difficulty from week two. Lie on your front with our arms in a W position. Lift your chest off the ground very slightly. Hold for two to five seconds. **More advanced:** Have your arms out in front of you when you peel your chest up off the ground. Lift your feet up as well, so you are squeezing your glutes.

GLUTE BRIDGE



GLUTE BRIDGE

Lie on your back with your feet on the ground hip-width apart. Your arms should be down by your side. Tuck your pelvis and slowly roll your spine up so your hips are in the air. Hold at the top as you inhale, then exhale to roll back down.



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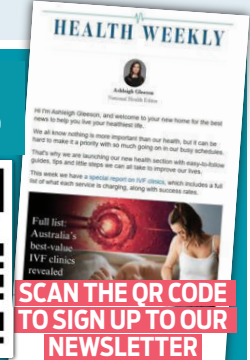
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