

After neck surgery (cervical spine), from the front or the back

After neck surgery



Count the weeks from the day of your operation. The date is on your discharge card.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

Weeks 0–2

Walk from the day after the operation: short walks, often. A collar is often not needed after this operation; if we gave you one, wear it exactly as written on your prescription. After surgery from the front, a sore throat, a hoarse voice and some difficulty swallowing are common and settle over days to weeks: eat soft food and chew well. Sleep on your back or side with one pillow. Keep the wound dry until the stitches are out.

Weight bearing Full. Walk as much as is comfortable.



Walking

Walk in short blocks. Sit before the pain builds, then carry on.

Little and often

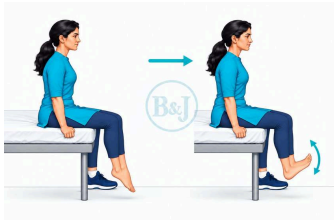
Every day

✓ **Should feel**

Distance building slowly

✗ **Should not feel**

Pushing through heavy legs



Ankle pumps

Pump the feet up and down to keep the blood moving.

20 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**

The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**

Calf pain or swelling — tell us



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or मराठी — or ask for
sheet 94

Nallasopara West 87665 22099 · 12–2 pm, 7.30–9.30 pm

Virar East 92702 84859 · 5.30–7.30 pm

Monday to Saturday · Closed on Sunday. Urgent injury such as a
fracture or dislocation? Please call first.



Shoulder blade squeeze

Squeeze the shoulder blades together and down.

10 times

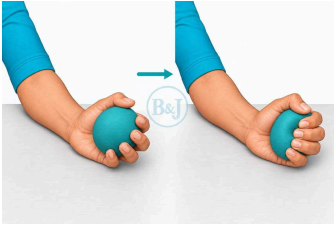
3 times a day

✓ Should feel

Between the shoulder blades

✗ Should not feel

The shoulders lifting



Grip squeeze

Squeeze a soft ball gently.

10 times

2 times a day

✓ Should feel

The hand working

✗ Should not feel

Pain

Not yet Lifting anything heavier than a full glass of water, carrying a load on the head or shoulder, looking up for long, or driving. Sitting on the floor, squatting or using an Indian toilet — until we have told you it is safe.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 2–6

Stitches out. Walk longer each day, building up to 30 minutes. Start moving the neck gently, only as far as is comfortable. Desk work is often possible from about 4 weeks. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing Full.



Walking

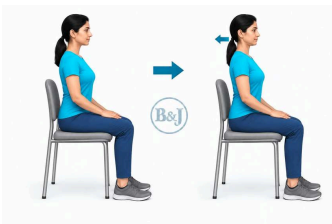
Weight-bearing walking loads the bone and helps it stay strong.

30 minutes

Most days

✓ **Should feel**
Comfortable exercise

✗ **Should not feel**
Sudden back pain — stop and tell us



Chin tuck

Sit tall. Draw your chin straight back, making a double chin. Do not tip your head down. Hold, then release.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A gentle stretch at the back of the neck

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain, or dizziness



Neck rotation

Turn your head slowly to one side as far as is comfortable. Hold, then turn the other way.

5 each side

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch on the opposite side

✗ **Should not feel**
Pain going down the arm

Not yet Heavy lifting, carrying a load on the head, riding a two-wheeler, or driving until you can turn your head easily and we clear you. Sitting on the floor, squatting or using an Indian toilet — until we have told you it is safe.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 6–12

We check the X-ray at your visit. Build neck and shoulder strength and go back to work: heavy manual work usually at about 3 months. Driving once you can turn your head fully and we have cleared you. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing Full.



Isometric neck holds

Place your palm on your forehead and press gently — do not let the head move. Repeat at the back and each side.

Hold 5 seconds

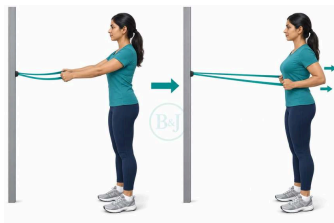
5 each direction

✓ Should feel

The muscles working, without movement

✗ Should not feel

Any pain



Band row

Pull a band back, squeezing the shoulder blades together.

12 times

Once a day

✓ Should feel

The shoulder blade muscles working

✗ Should not feel

Shrugging



Upper trapezius stretch

Sit on your hand. Tilt the opposite ear towards your shoulder until you feel a stretch.

Hold 20 seconds

3 each side

✓ Should feel

A stretch down the side of the neck

✗ Should not feel

Sharp or shooting pain

Not yet Heavy lifting, carrying loads on the head, or contact sport until we clear you.



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Stop and telephone us if

- Difficulty breathing, or swelling in the front of the neck that is getting bigger — go to the nearest hospital at once
- New weakness or numbness in the arms or legs, clumsy hands, or unsteady walking
- Loss of control of urine or stools — go to the hospital the same day
- Swallowing so difficult that you cannot drink water, or choking on food
- Watery fluid leaking from the wound, or a headache that is worse when you sit up
- Wound redness, discharge or fever
- Sudden breathlessness, chest pain, or a swollen, painful calf — go to the nearest hospital



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