

Patty's PT Tips

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September 28, 2022

Neck Strengthening Exercises

Why work on the neck?

Increase Range of Motion

Improve Balance

Increase Postural Awareness

Improve Breathing, swallowing and speech

Warm-up Techniques:

Self-massage at the base of the skull, cervical paraspinals, upper trapezii

Tools: Fingers, 2 tennis balls taped together, vibrating massager, soft ball, Theracane

Slow Active Range of Motion Exercise:

Chin retraction/double chin posture 5x

Chin retraction and nod "Yes" 5x

Chin retraction then rotate 5x to the right; 5x to the left. Pause between reps

Ear to shoulder 45 degrees to R shoulder in chin tuck position. Pause 5x. Repeat to L-slowly

Cervical "clock" or "nose circles"-5x clockwise and 5x counterclockwise

Isometrics:

Thumb under chin in chin tuck posture. Pull down and in. Hold 5 counts then slow release. 5 reps

Resisted rotation-R palm on R temple hold 5 counts. 5 reps Then repeat to the L

Resisted neck extension-Fingers laced behind back of skull with shoulder blades pulled down and back. Repeat 5 x. Rest between repetitions.

Shoulder girdle strengthening:

Assume great, erect posture. If possible, do this without your back touching the back of the chair to incorporate more trunk strength. With belly button pulled in shrug shoulders while keeping chin

tucked. Hold to count of 3. Repeat 5x. Lower shoulder blades down and back as if putting blades into your hip pockets. Hold to count of 3. Repeat 5x. Breathe between reps in a neutral, relaxed posture.

General Recommendations:

If these exercises do not feel challenging enough you can use elastic bands for resistance of any of the head motions. Use dumbbells in hands for shoulder shrugs.

Keep in mind, if you don't maintain good posture you're cheating.

If you can't maintain good posture do fewer reps or use less resistance.

If you can do all the exercises for 10 to 12 reps you need to increase resistance in the exercise.

Complete the session with eyes closed and use "box breathing". 4 second inhales/4 second exhales that move from upper chest to bilateral rib cages and then deep belly breaths. Inhale through the nose, pause, then exhale through pursed lips.