



## Neck Exercises for Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery

Royal North Shore Hospital  
The Mater Hospital  
North Shore Private Hospital  
Northern Beaches Hospital



Clinical Associate Professor  
**Mark Sywak**  
Phone: 02 9437 1731  
Mobile: 0400 209 039  
E-mail: [marksywak@nebsc.com.au](mailto:marksywak@nebsc.com.au)  
Web: [www.SydneyEndocrineSurgery.com.au](http://www.SydneyEndocrineSurgery.com.au)

University Clinic, Royal North Shore Hospital

Level 2, Suite 202, 69 Christie Street  
St Leonards, NSW, 2065 Australia

Suite 9, Level 6, 105 Frenchs Forest Road  
Frenchs Forest, NSW, 2086 Australia

**If you are being treated by a physiotherapist or doctor for neck pain then please seek their advice first before commencing these exercises.**

Neck pain and stiffness is common following thyroid surgery. The neck is composed of vertebrae and ligaments that supply stability to the spine, and muscles that provide support and allow motion. The neck is very vulnerable because it is less protected than the rest of the spine, it supports the head, and it is very flexible. During your surgery the neck is extended (bent backwards) for the duration of the procedure which may be for three hours. This can cause muscle spasm which then leads to pain and tension in the neck. People with pre-existing neck problems such as cervical spondylosis or a previous whiplash injury are more susceptible. Exercising the neck muscles before and after your surgery significantly reduces the risk of muscle strain and subsequent neck strain. You should perform the following exercises **FOR 10 COUNTS EACH, TWICE DAILY, FOR 10 DAYS BEFORE AND 10 DAYS AFTER your surgery.** Exercises should be done until a gentle tension is felt. Do not bounce or the muscle will tighten up more. It is important to return to the central position.

## NECK EXERCISES

### 1. Flexion/Rotation (sternocleidomastoid)



Tuck chin to chest. Rotate to left, then centre, then right. Repeat 10 times

### 2. Flexion/Extension (posterior neck muscles)



Tuck chin to chest (flexion). Feel stretch in back of neck, then push back (extension) as far as possible. Repeat 10 times

### 3. Lateral Side Bends (scalenes and upper trapezius)



Place head to right side. Can use right hand to add extra stretch. Lowering left shoulder will also intensify stretch. Repeat 10 times, then repeat on the other side.

### 4. Shoulder Shrugs (trapezius and levator scapulae)



Elevate shoulders to neck. Repeat 10 times