

Post-Whiplash Rehabilitation Program

This program is designed to address neck stiffness, muscle tension, and restore mobility after an auto accident or whiplash injury. It emphasizes gradual progress, focusing on range of motion, muscle activation, posture correction, and pain relief.

Guidelines:

- **Frequency:** 3–5 times per week
- **Duration:** 10–20 minutes
- **Progression:** Start with gentle movement, increase intensity slowly. Avoid pain-provoking exercises.

Phase 1: Early Recovery (First 2 weeks)

Goal: Restore range of motion and reduce muscle guarding

• Neck Range of Motion (Pain-Free Only)

1. **Neck Flexion/Extension:** Slowly look down, then up (10 reps).
2. **Neck Side Bends:** Tilt your ear toward your shoulder on each side (10 reps).
3. **Neck Rotations:** Turn your head left and right (10 reps).

• Chin Tucks (Seated/Standing)

- Gently draw chin backward (as if making a double chin). Hold 3–5 sec, 10 reps.
- **Goal:** Strengthen deep neck flexors and reduce forward head posture.

• Scapular Squeeze (Postural Activation)

- Squeeze shoulder blades together, holding for 5 seconds, for 10 reps.
- **Goal:** Improve postural muscles and unload neck strain.

• Diaphragmatic Breathing (Relaxation)

- Place one hand on your belly. Inhale deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to rise. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Perform for 3–5 minutes.

Phase 2: Intermediate Stage (Weeks 3-6)

Goal: Restore strength, endurance, and coordination

• Isometric Neck Strengthening

1. **Flexion:** Press forehead against hand (without moving neck). Hold 5s, for 5 reps.
2. **Extension:** Press the back of your head into your hand. Hold for 5 sec, 5 reps.

3. Side Bends & Rotation: Apply resistance with your hand against each side and hold for 5 seconds. 5 reps.

- **Wall Angels**

- Stand with your back against a wall. Slowly raise your arms overhead in a “Y” shape, keeping them against the wall. Do 10 reps.

- **Goal:** Improve scapular control and upper body posture.

- **Levator Scapula Stretch**

- Sit or stand. Gently tilt your head toward one side and look down toward the armpit. Hold for 20–30 seconds per side, 3 reps.

- **Goal:** Release tension in neck muscles.

Phase 3: Advanced Strengthening (6–12 weeks)

Goal: Restore full function and prevent reinjury

- **Theraband Rows (Postural Control)**

- Anchor a resistance band. Pull it back, squeezing shoulder blades together. Perform 2–3 sets of 10–12 reps.

- **Prone Y-T Raises (Scapular Stability)**

- Lying prone on a bench, lift your arms overhead in a “Y” and “T” shape. Perform 2 sets of 8–10 reps.

- **Proprioceptive Exercises (Improving Coordination)**

- Use stability ball or wobbleboard for dynamic stability (or 1-legged 1/4 squats).

- **Aerobic Exercise (Cardio Support)**

- Include walking for 20–30 minutes to improve overall fitness and circulation.

Additional Tips:

- Monitor signs of dizziness, headaches, or worsening symptoms; if these occur, reduce intensity or quit and talk to your doctor.

- Drink adequate water to optimize healing (half of your body weight in lbs, in ounces of water. i.e. If you weigh 200 lbs, you need 100 oz of water each day).

This offers a balanced approach for recovery, ensuring a safe return to normal activity while preventing chronic issues. Always consult your doctor if any questions.