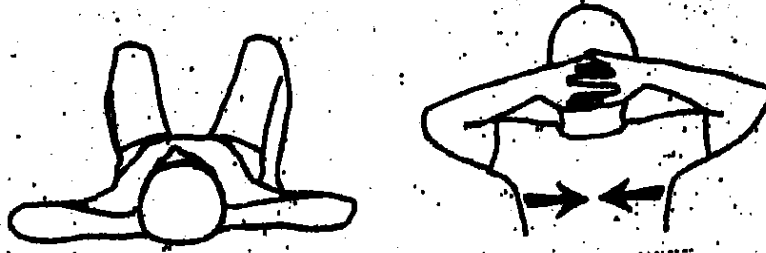


Stretching Exercises for the Neck and Upper Back

Shoulder Blade Pinch

From a bent knee position, with your fingers interlaced behind your head, pull your shoulder blades together to create tension in the upper back area. (As you do this, your chest should move upward.) Hold this controlled tension for 4-5 seconds, then relax and gently pull your head forward. This will help release tension and allow the neck to be stretched effectively.

Think of creating tension, relaxing the same area, then stretching the back of the neck to help keep the muscles of the neck free to move without tightness. Repeat 3-4 times.



Upper Spine and Neck

From the starting position of the last stretch, you can stretch your upper spine and neck. This stretch helps reduce tension in the neck area and allows for freer movement of head and neck.

Interlace your fingers behind your head at about ear level. Now, use the power of your arms to slowly pull your head forward until you feel a slight stretch in the back of the neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds, then slowly return to the original starting position. Do this 3-4 times to gradually loosen up the upper spine and neck.



Child
Neurology
of Tulsa

Stretching Exercises con't

Gently pull your head and chin toward your left knee. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and lower your head back down to the floor, then pull your head gently toward your right knee. Repeat 2-3 times.



With the back of your head on the floor, turn your chin toward your shoulders (as you keep your head resting on the floor). Turn chin only as far as needed to get an easy stretch in the side of your neck. Hold 5 seconds, then stretch to the other side. Repeat 2-3 times.



Excerpted from: Anderson, Bob. Stretching. Shelter Publications: Bolinas, California, 1980, p.24,26.