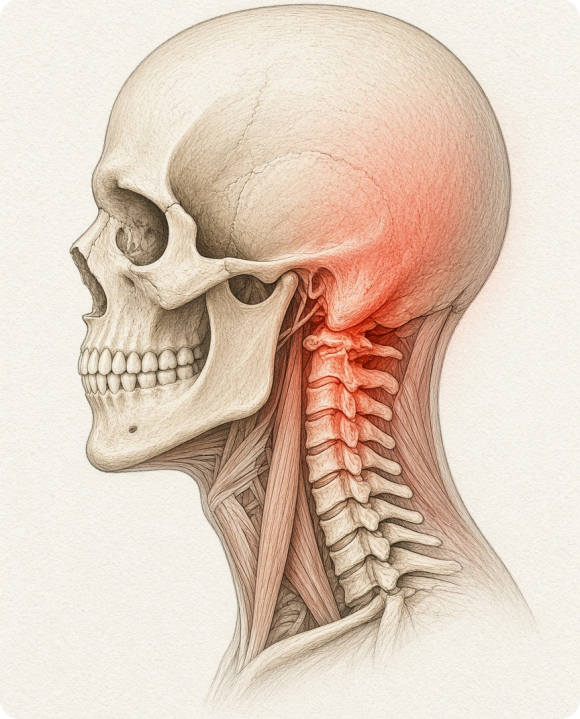
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PATIENT GUIDE

Cervicogenic Headaches

That nasty headache could be **coming from your neck.**

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What is a cervicogenic headache?

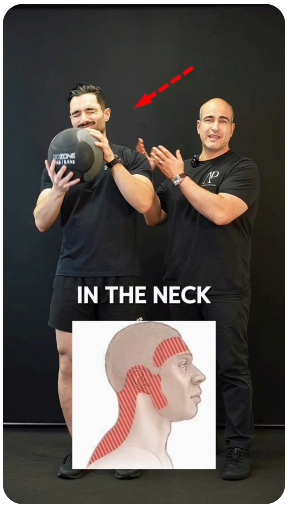
It's a headache that starts in your neck. The pain usually sits at the base of the skull and is often on one side of the head. Gentle stretching, strengthening and releasing tight muscles can help.

QUICK CHECK

Does this sound like you?

- [ ] Pain at the **base of your skull**
- [ ] Headaches that are usually on **one side**
- [ ] **Neck pain** that comes with the headache
- [ ] Headache and neck pain when you **lift heavy objects** or hold your neck in certain positions
- [ ] When it gets really bad, pain **spreading toward your shoulder or down into your arm**

If you ticked a few boxes, your neck could be part of the problem. Try the 3 exercises on the next pages.



Headache and neck pain when lifting heavy objects



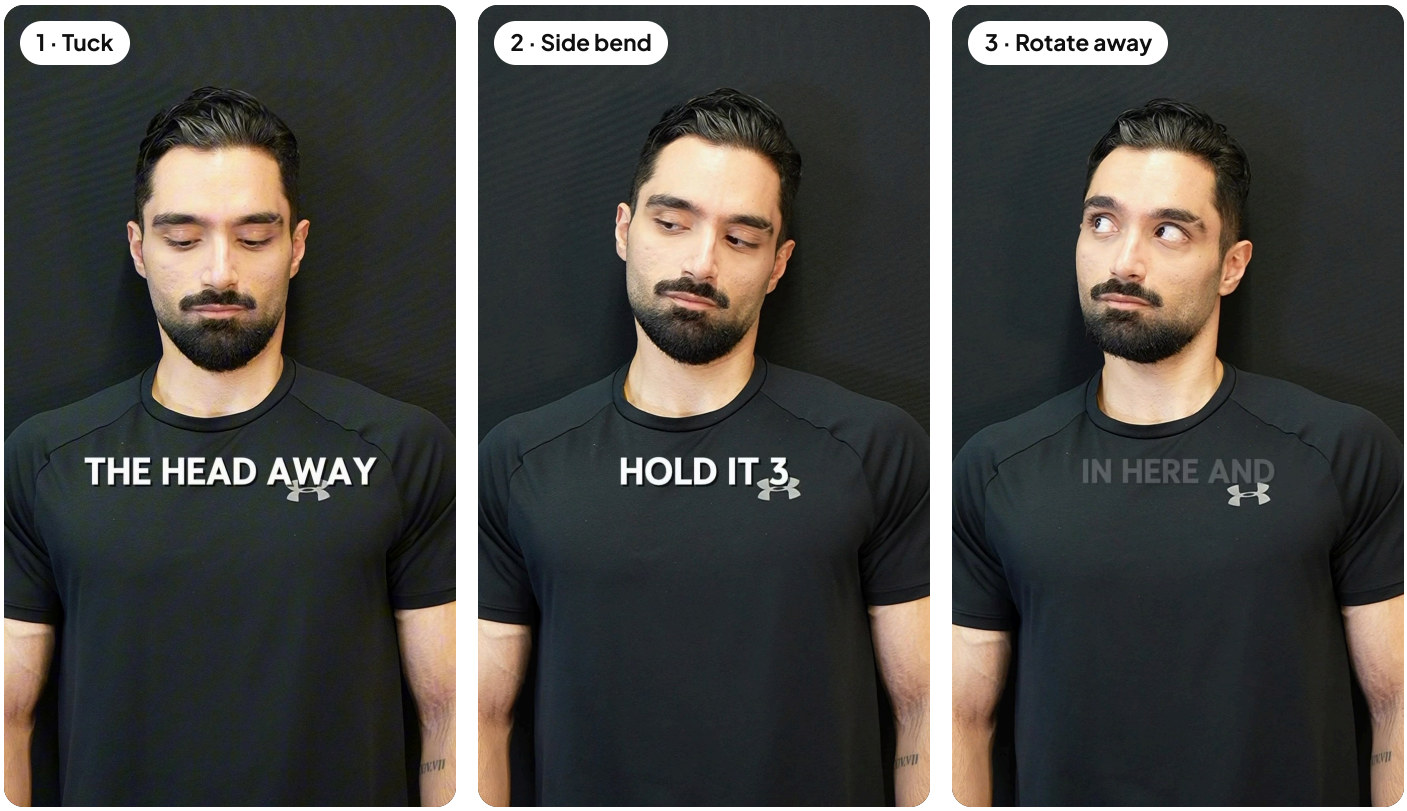
When it gets bad, pain can radiate toward the arm

YOUR 3 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Wall chin tuck + side bend + rotation

Stretches the side of the neck



1. Lean against the wall and **tuck your chin in**.
2. Imagine a rod going right through your nose. **Gently side bend**, rotating only through that rod.
3. Then **gently rotate your head away** from the side bend.
4. Hold for **3, 2, 1**. You should feel a stretch along the side of your neck. Repeat.

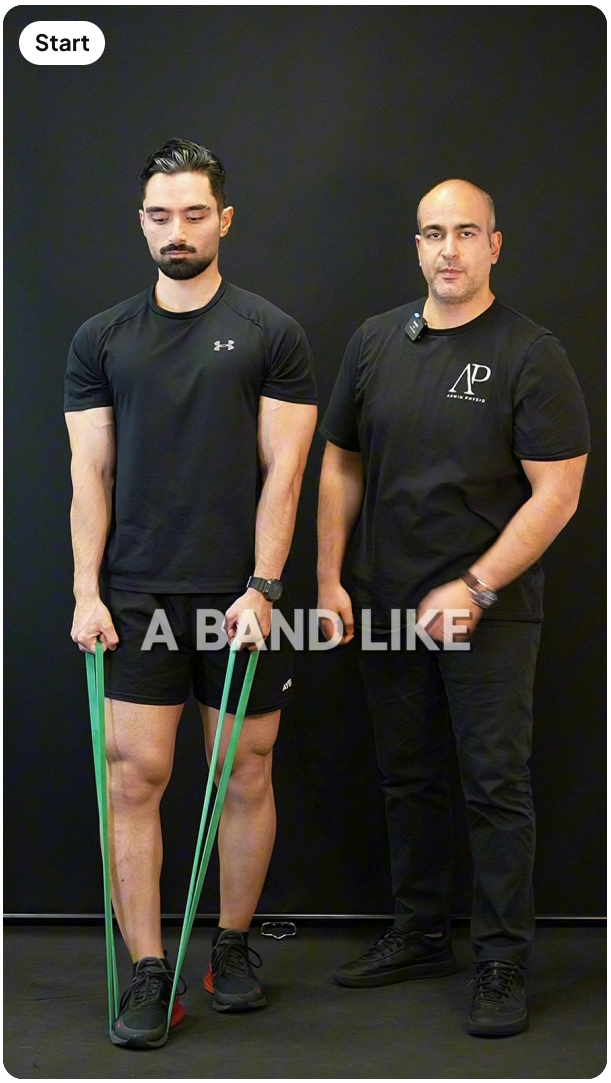
5 reps each side, 3-second hold

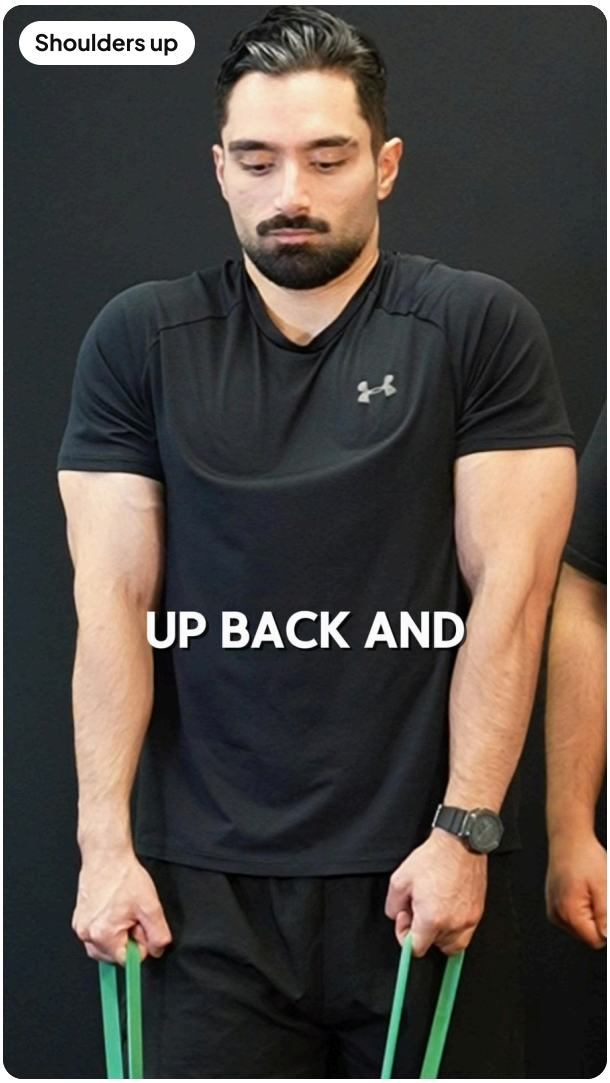
Suggested dosing

Stop if you feel sharp pain, dizziness, or numbness or tingling that gets worse.

2 Resisted upper trap shrugs (band)

Strengthens the upper traps





1. Stand tall and **hold a resistance band** under your feet, one end in each hand.
2. Bring your shoulders **up, back and down**.
3. Do it in a **slow, controlled manner**. No jerking.

2–3 sets of 10–15 slow reps

Suggested dosing

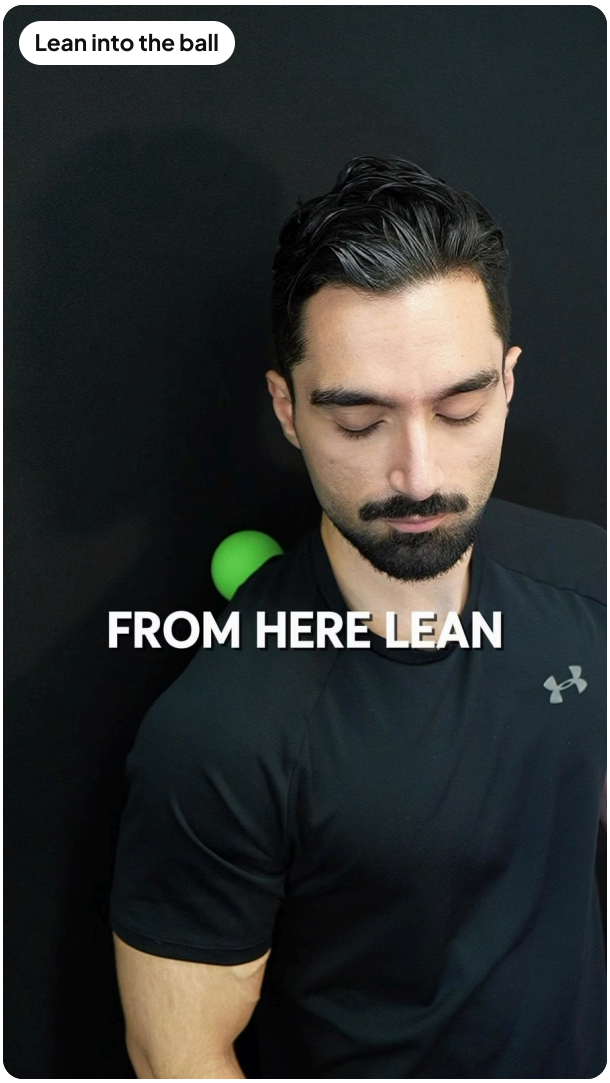
> *"Weak traps can lead to cervicogenic headaches."*
>
> — Armin

Stop if you feel sharp pain, dizziness, or numbness or tingling that gets worse.

3 Upper trap release with a massage ball

Releases trigger points in the upper traps





1. Grab a massage ball and put it on your **upper traps**, where the trigger points are.
2. **Lean into the ball** against the wall.
3. Gently go **back and forth** until you find the sore spot.
4. Once you do, **press and hold** that area for about **20 seconds**.
5. Release and repeat.

2–3 holds per spot, about 20 seconds each, both sides

Suggested dosing (20-second hold is from the video)

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Release
Massage ball on the upper traps, 2–3 × 20-second holds each side

02
Stretch
Wall chin tuck + side bend + rotation, 5 reps each side, 3-second hold

03
Strengthen
Band shrugs, 2–3 sets of 10–15 slow reps

Suggested routine. Do it once a day and move gently. A mild stretch is normal; it should not make your headache worse.

Stop the exercise if you notice

- Sharp or worsening pain
- Dizziness, light-headedness or changes in your vision
- Numbness, tingling or weakness in your arm that gets worse

If an exercise keeps causing these, stop it and get assessed.

SAFETY FIRST

Get checked right away if you have

- A sudden, severe **“worst ever”** headache that peaks within seconds or minutes
- A headache after a **fall, accident, or head or neck injury**
- **Fever with a stiff neck**
- Changes in **vision, speech or balance**, weakness, numbness, or confusion
- **Dizziness, fainting, double vision** or trouble swallowing
- A **new headache after age 50**, or a pattern that keeps getting worse

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for these. If you have **arm pain, numbness or weakness that keeps spreading**, book an assessment soon.

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NEED MORE HELP?

Book an assessment with Armin

In clinic or virtually. See current options and times at the link.

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Disclaimer: This handout is for education only. It is not a diagnosis or medical advice and does not replace an assessment by a qualified health professional. If you're unsure whether these exercises are right for you, check with your physiotherapist or doctor first.

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