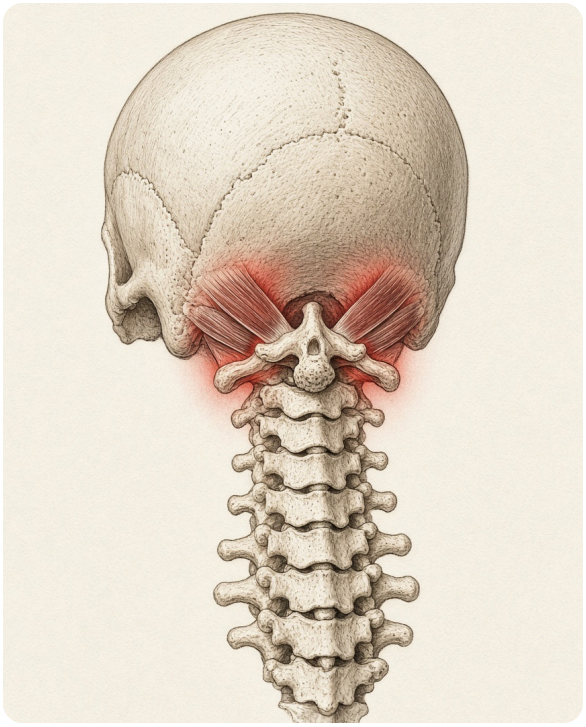
ARMIN PHYSIO



PATIENT GUIDE

Upper Cervical Neck Pain

Pain at the base of your skull? It could be **upper cervical neck pain.**

Armin Ghayyur
Physiotherapist · arminphysio.com

What is upper cervical neck pain?

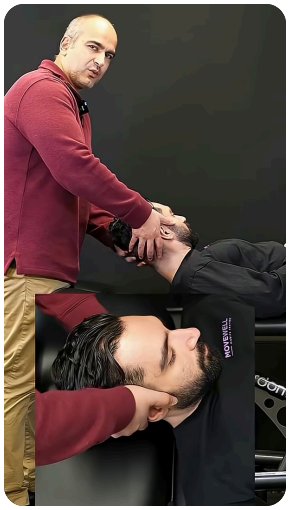
Upper cervical neck pain happens when the joints, muscles (like the small suboccipital muscles under your skull) or surrounding tissues in the upper part of your neck become irritated, often contributing to neck stiffness and headaches. Improving upper neck mobility, deep neck flexor strength and postural endurance can help reduce pain and restore movement.

QUICK CHECK

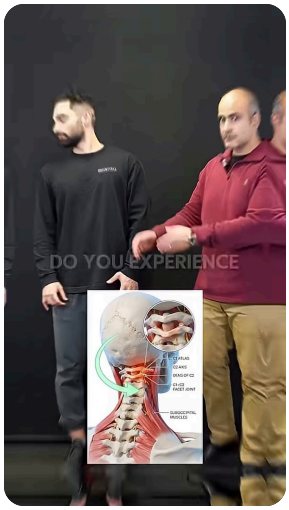
Does this sound like you?

- [ ] **Pain at the base of the skull**
- [ ] Neck range of motion **more limited to one side** than the other
- [ ] With your neck **flexed all the way**, turning is **more limited one way**
- [ ] **Headaches** that start in the neck and travel towards the forehead
- [ ] Discomfort with **prolonged sitting or looking down**

If you ticked a few boxes, the top of your neck could be the problem. Try the 4 exercises on the next pages.



More limited turning one way with the neck flexed



Headaches that start in the neck

YOUR 4 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Chin tuck + nose-rod rotation

Works the top joints of your neck



1. In this position, **tuck the chin in**.
2. **Imagine there's a rod going right through the nose.**
3. **Only rotate around that rod**, going side to side, working the upper cervical vertebrae.

1 minute, then repeat

From Armin's video

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

2 Wall chin tuck + rotation

Elongates the neck and works the upper neck joints



1. **Lean back against the wall.**
2. **Elongate that neck.**
3. **Imagine there's a rod going right through the head**, and you can only rotate around that rod.
4. Gently rotate side to side.

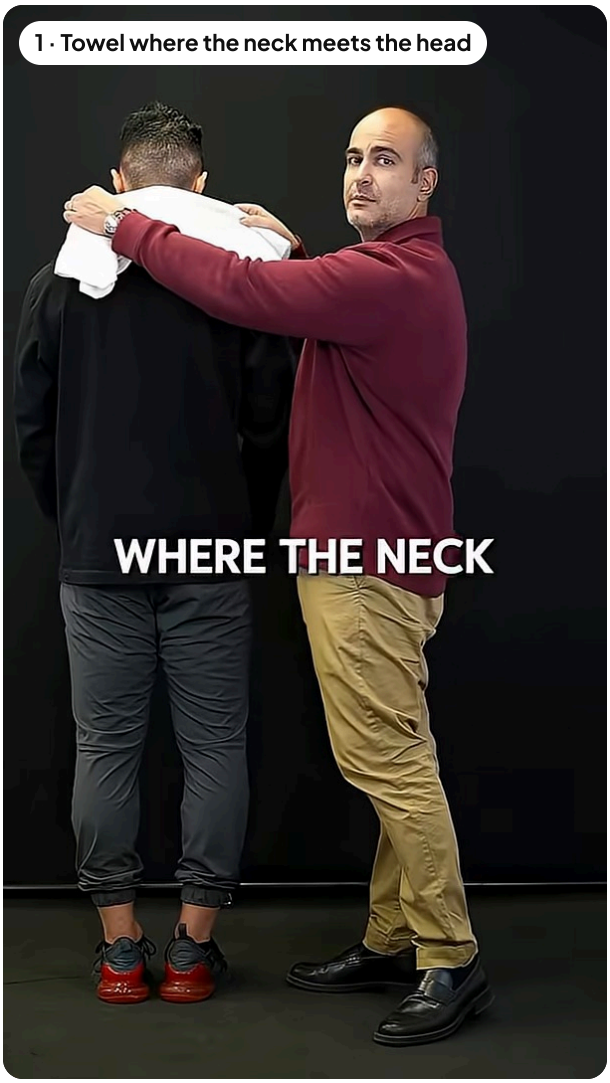
3 sets of 10–15 slow rotations

Suggested, matching Armin's description (from his suboccipital video)

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

3 Towel-assisted neck rotation

Helps you rotate into the side you're stiff on





1. **Grab a towel** and place it right **where the neck meets the head** (around your hairline).
2. From the front, **hold on to the towel** like so.
3. **Turn your head** and use the towel to assist you in rotating the neck in the area you're resistant in.

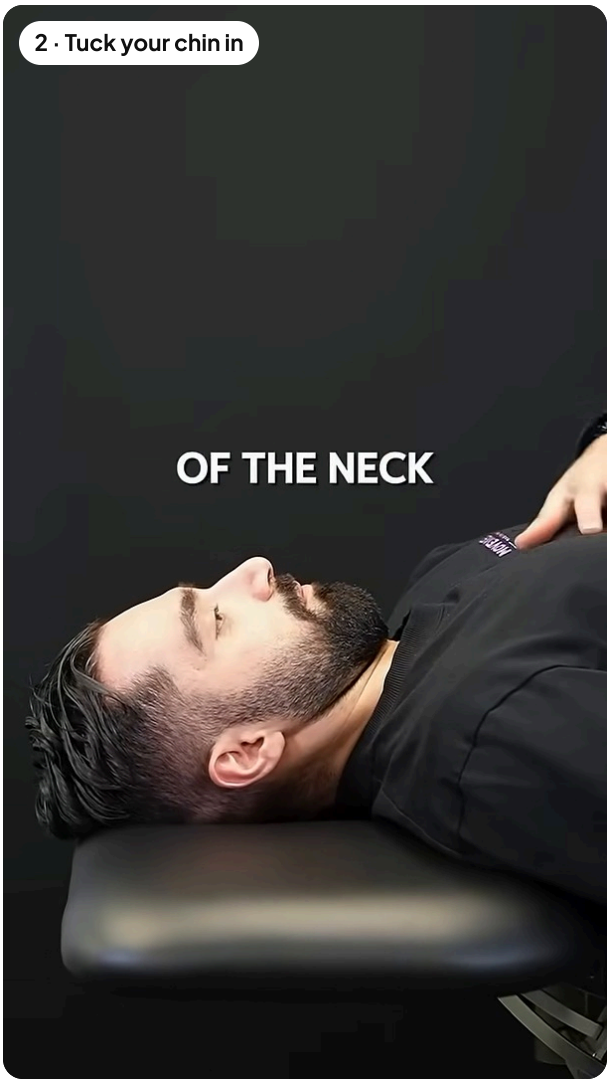
2 minutes
From Armin's video

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

4 Chin tuck lying down

Activates the deep muscles at the front of the neck





1. **Lie flat on your back.**
2. Place your **tongue at the roof of your mouth**. That'll activate the little muscles in the neck.
3. From here, **tuck your chin in all the way**, pressing the back of the neck into the bed.
4. **Hold it for three seconds**, relax and repeat.

3 sets of 10–15 reps, slow and controlled

From Armin's video description

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Rotate
Chin tuck + nose-rod rotation, 1 minute

02
Elongate
Wall chin tuck + rotation, 3 × 10–15

03
Assist
Towel-assisted rotation, 2 minutes

04
Activate
Chin tuck lying down, 3 × 10–15

The 1- and 2-minute times are from Armin's video and the 3 sets of 10–15 from his description. The wall exercise dosing and doing it once a day are suggestions. Move slowly and with control.

Stop the exercise if you notice

- Pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm
- Dizziness, or pain that keeps building as you go
- Pain that lingers or is worse the next day

Sudden severe headaches, dizziness with other nerve symptoms, or new vision changes need prompt medical assessment.

SAFETY FIRST

Get checked right away if you have

- Neck pain after a **car accident, fall or hit to the head**, especially with **severe pain** or not being able to move your neck
- A **sudden, severe or unusual headache** ("the worst headache of your life")
- **Dizziness, double vision, trouble speaking or swallowing**, drooping of the face, or fainting
- **Numbness, tingling or weakness** in your arms or hands that is **getting worse**, or in **both arms**
- **Clumsy hands, trouble walking or poor balance**, or new **bladder or bowel** changes
- A **stiff neck with a fever**, constant pain at night, or **unexplained weight loss**

Call 911 for a sudden severe headache, trouble speaking, face drooping or weakness on one side. For the others, see a doctor right away or go to the nearest emergency department. If your neck isn't improving after a few weeks, **book an assessment**.

FREE · STAY IN THE LOOP

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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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