

10 Ways To End Stiff and Achy

NECK/SHOULDER PAIN



**Avoid injections, prevent surgery, and
stop taking pain medications.**

By Leading USA Physical Therapist, Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

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About The Author

Dr. David graduated from Jefferson High School in 2004. He then attended the University of Texas at Austin through 2007 on a full-ride scholarship completing a 4 year degree in 3.5 years. He then went on to complete a doctorate in physical therapy at Texas State University - San Marcos in 2011. Dr. David then completed a unique fellowship/ residency training in 2015.



Less than 1% of physical therapists in the nation have completed this level of specialization. Having only been a PT for a little over a decade, this gives Dr. David the skills and knowledge of an expert clinician that has practiced for 30+ years.

Dr. David founded El Paso Manual Physical Therapy with the intent of helping people avoid surgery, get off pain medication and keep up an active lifestyle. In 2019, Dr. David started posting regularly to YouTube and has since then seen the EPMPT channel grow to over 250,000 subscribers. He continues to use the platform to share expert tips, advice, and exercises to people all around the world.

Introduction

Hey there!

Thank you for downloading “10 Ways To End Stiff & Achy Neck/Shoulder Pain.”

The neck and shoulder tips I share here are parts of treatment and advice I use with my patients everyday. They will certainly improve and possibly even eliminate your neck and shoulder pain.

Please note that I never have my neck and shoulder pain clients do all these things at the same time.

Usually there is just 1 or 2 tips that has the greatest impact on their neck and shoulder problem.

My best advice is to **only try 1 tip at a time.**

This will allow you to find the 1 or 2 things that will work the best for you.

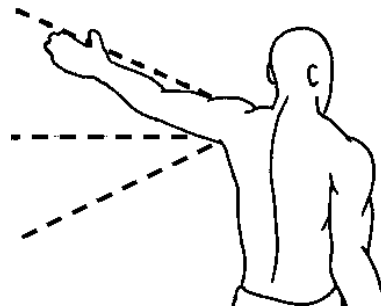
Without a thorough examination of your neck and shoulder and taking into consideration your specific situation, there is no way to tell you which of these tips are most important for you to start with.

In order to give you a sure way to help your neck and shoulder pain we must find the root cause of the pain through an examination and treatment.

With that out of the way: **Enjoy the tips!**

Tip #1 - Don't Stretch

Avoid These Specific Stretches:



This is counterintuitive for most people because they might actually provide relief of neck and shoulder pain for a few minutes.

But the truth is that when these stretches are done frequently and aggressively, they can cause you to stretch out ligaments and cartilage that can take **over a year** to heal.

They might provide relief for a few minutes but the damage they cause in the long-term can take **years** to reverse.

As the ligaments stretch out further and weaken, surgery could become a necessity if the joint becomes too loose.

Tip #2 - Use Ice AND Heat

There is much debate about whether ice is better to use than heat.

The research is EXTREMELY confusing for most people (even for medical professionals!)

Let me give you the super simple 2 sentence explanation about it:

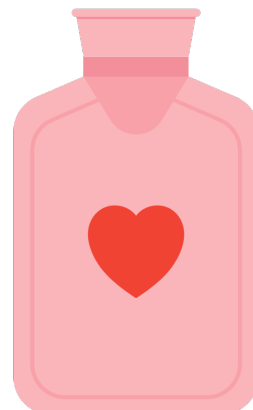
- **There's a certain percentage of the population that gets better with ice and another that gets better with heat.**
- **There are some body parts that respond better to ice and others that get better with heat.**

So here's my advice: **Try both!**

Whether you use ice or heat, apply it for 15 minutes then take it off for 15 minutes. Repeat for 1-2 hours.

If one doesn't work, then try the other.

Do a little trial and error to find which helps you better.



Tip #3 - Avoid Sleeping on the Painful Side

Most people figure this one out. If the shoulder or neck problem gets bad enough they learn to avoid lying on the painful side.

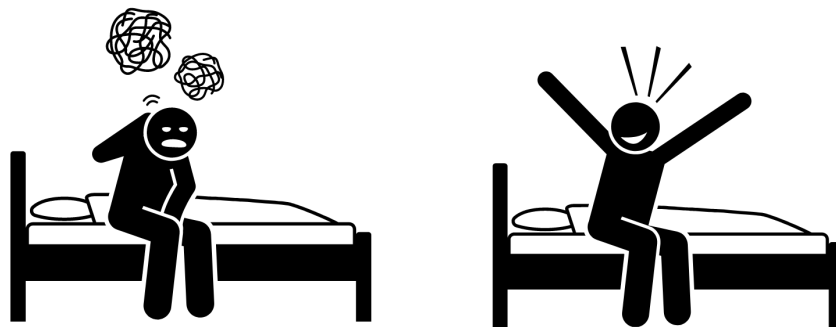
BUT even if you don't yet have shoulder pain that is waking you up at night then you should start sleeping on the other side **now**.

This will allow you to prevent irritating the painful side while you are sleeping at night so that you do not find yourself waking up in pain.

Many people we see with neck and shoulder problems have a habit of taking pain killers right before going to bed.

Be aware that if you take ibuprofen or naproxen everyday for 6-8 weeks or more, the risk of internal bleeding skyrockets.

Hospitalization (and in some cases death) due to intestinal bleeding from overuse of these medications is extremely common in people ages 50+.



Tip #4 - Avoid Reaching For Heavy Items

We all do these things at some point:

- Reach to the back of the refrigerator for a heavy watermelon.
- Reach out with both arms to spread out a heavy blanket or comforter on a bed.
- Reach into the backseat of your vehicle for a heavy bag.
- Reach to the back of the washing machine to unstick and pull out a heavy wet towel.



This puts lots of stress on the neck joints, rotator cuff and tendons.

Although it might be impossible to completely avoid these situations, you can be aware of them ahead of time.

You can allow your neck and shoulder to heal by reducing the number of times you aggravate the problem with these activities.

Tip #5 - Get Elbow Support

Do at least 3 of the following 4 items apply to you?

1. Desk job where you sit for 4+ hours a day.
2. Neck/shoulder problems are worse at the end of the day.
3. Lots of knots in the neck and shoulders.
4. Tension headaches at the end of the day.

If 3 or 4 of the items apply to you, then you should find support under your elbows while you're at work or sitting at a desk.



Raise your armrests as much as you can OR place your forearms on the desk so that it shoves your shoulders up about 1 inch.

If you can spend about 50% or more of your computer time with your elbows supported like this, you will dramatically reduce the amount of times you feel the need to take a pain killer for the knots and tension headaches you feel each week.

This tip alone should begin to allow you to kick that habit of popping an ibuprofen on your way home from work.

Tip #6 - Find The Right Posture

Posture can get very confusing for people. We often get questions from our followers on social media asking:

“I know my posture is bad but I don’t know what my posture should look like. Can you explain what the best posture is?”



Here is my answer:

The truth is there is no **one** perfect posture that will work for everyone. Posture is greatly influenced by genetics and your usual daily routine.

My advice is for you to focus on these 3 things:

1. Straighten up just a little more than you are right now.
2. If you stand or sit for long periods of time at work get some movement in every 15-30 minutes.
3. Avoid straitening up too much! You’ll likely feel like you are straining your back and neck if you’re too straight.

Tip #7 - Properly Warm Up Before Chores & Exercise

Take 2-3 minutes before starting household chores or gym exercises to warm up! (Do not stretch out, remember Tip #1)

This will allow your neck and shoulder problem to be able to tolerate the next 30-60 minutes of work that you're about to do.

Some suggestions are:

- 30-40 gentle head side bends
- 30-40 shoulder shrugs
- 30-40 arm circles



Tip # 8 - Avoid “Giving It Time”

We hear this all the time: *“I’m just going to give it time to see if that helps.”*

We especially hear this from people that get shoulder pain during or after exercise. They take a break from sports or the gym for a week or two.

They sometimes can feel better but as soon as they return to exercising the pain comes back.

This is extremely frustrating because it leaves people feeling hopeless about ever safely going back to their favorite activities or exercise.

My advice: Don’t completely stop exercising, just change your exercise routine up for 1-2 weeks. **But don’t forget to keep active.**

Neck and shoulder problems almost always get worse with no exercise. Find something you can do that does not aggravate you.



Tip #9 - Avoid Heavy Purses/Bags



For people with chronic neck and shoulder problems, carrying a bag weighing more than 3 pounds for over 5 minutes can cause hours of discomfort.

In more severe cases, it can even cause pain, numbness and tingling into the arm and hand.

My advice:

- Constrain yourself to a smaller bag.
- Weigh your bag and keep it under 3 pounds.
- Wear backpacks snug so the weight is distributed onto your back.

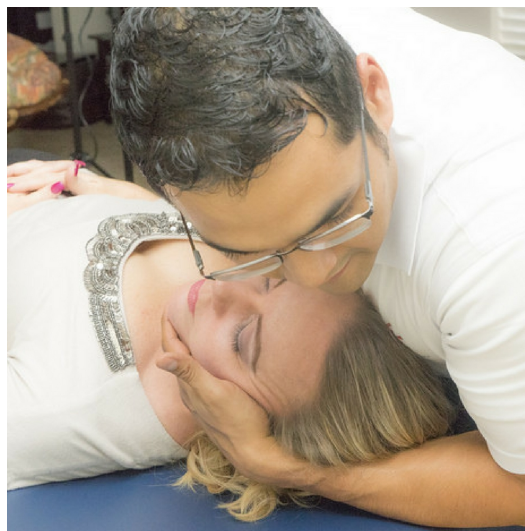
Tip #10 - Go to Physical Therapy

Seeing a *Specialist Physical Therapist* is by far the fastest way to get rid of your neck and shoulder problem.

Research shows that manual therapy (hands-on treatment) in combination with the right exercises is proven to improve pain and function way faster than exercise only.

Manual therapy consists of precision massage and sometimes joint stretching techniques designed to loosen the most tight joints and muscles.

This is combined with advanced exercise science to help you get off pain medication and avoid surgery as fast and as naturally as possible.



Bonus Tips

Bonus Tip #1 - Regular Exercise



General exercise at least 2 to 3 times a week for 20-30 minutes is proven by countless research studies to improve overall health including: weight control, blood pressure, diabetes, depression, arthritis, decreasing risk of stroke and heart attacks.

It really is a “**miracle drug!**”

Specific exercise for your neck, shoulder, and arm muscles will protect against rotator cuff tears, shoulder impingement, cervical arthritis, degenerative disc/joint disease, stenosis, pinched nerves and herniated discs.

Bonus Tip #2 - Driving Adjustments: Headrest & Mirrors

Not many people know this but the headrests in our vehicles are a very important safety feature.



If you are rear ended, your head will go through a whiplash motion where it quickly gets yanked back then instantly thrown forward. This stretches out ligaments, tendons, and nerves. It can also damage cartilage and discs.

BUT if you constantly keep the back of your head touching the headrest while driving you will break up the whiplash motion and reduce damage to your neck.

This is especially important to do if you've currently got a neck/shoulder problem because a whiplash injury from a car accident can make the problem severely worse.

Don't forget to adjust your rear-view and side mirrors so that you can see them while your head is touching the headrest.

Bonus Tip #3 - Get Your Eyes Checked

Is it hard to read your computer screen?

Do you suspect you may need reading glasses?

Do you already use reading glasses or bifocals?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you're probably spending a good amount of time leaning your head forward to read things.



Whether it's at the computer, a book, magazine or newspaper - keeping your head forward on your body is harmful to do for extended periods of time.

Be sure to get your vision checked by a optometrist and invest in a pair of glasses that allow you to read from anywhere on the lens so that you can avoid tipping your head to read.

Virtual Consultation

Did you know you can request a virtual visit with our clinic? Ask questions, get coaching, and receive feedback to make sure you're doing your exercises correctly. You can even discuss your X-rays, MRI, or CT scan with us.

You can meet with me, Dr. David, or with one of our specialists.

Learn more about how you can schedule your appointment here:
www.epmanualphysicaltherapy.com/virtual-visit/

Hope to talk to you soon!

Conclusion

I really hope you find the solutions here that help you get rid of your neck/shoulder pain.

The tips here have been tried and tested by experts and are successfully used to prevent surgeries and help people avoid taking pain medications. If applied well, they are sure to give you significant relief.

Keep in mind that these tips are generalized to best fit most people. There's so much more detail and individualization you will get by going through a physical therapy examination.

Remember that our YouTube channel is packed with helpful content as well!

Your partner in healthcare,



Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

Neck & Shoulder Expert

Fellowship Trained Manual Therapist



Health Advice Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and information displayed throughout this guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our physical therapy practice. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow advice and various other physical factors.

It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of this examination from El Paso Manual Therapy, PLLC.

We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this ebook.