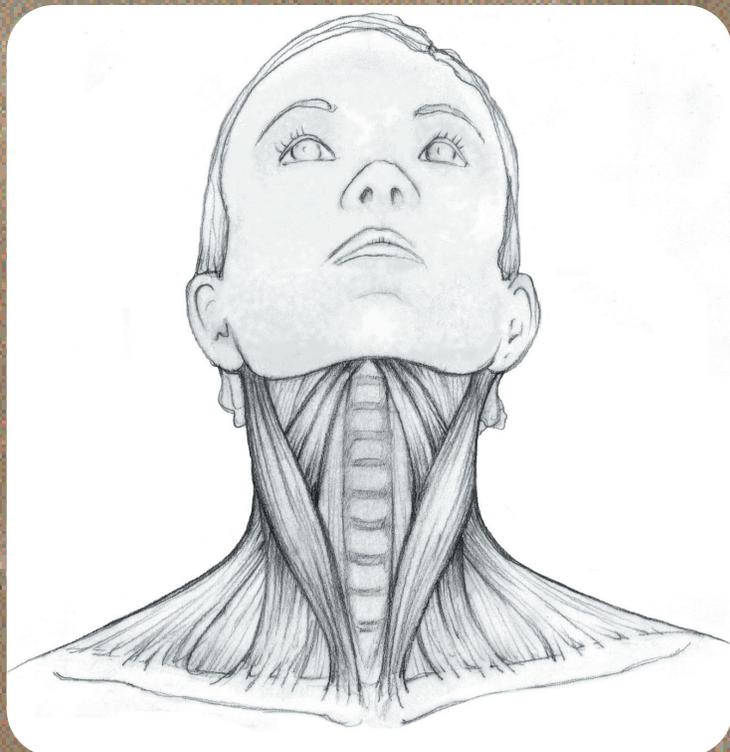
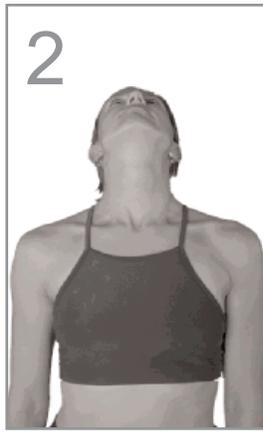
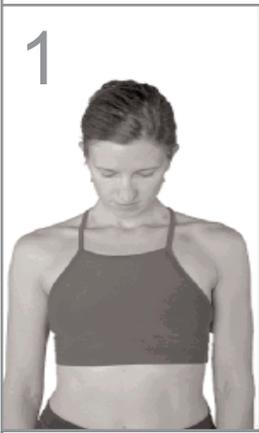


neck stretches

CAUTION: Always move slowly when doing neck stretches. Try to elongate your neck so you don't compress your vertebrae (bones). Read all the instructions and cautions thoroughly before beginning. You should never feel pain!



Neck Nods and Rolls



HINT: Throughout these routines, think about reaching your neck up and out before bending it to the sides, front or back. Elongate the stretched side with particular attention to avoid “crunching” the shortened side.

1) Actively reach your head toward the sky and forward as you gently lower your head, bringing your chin to your chest. Hold this for one breath.

2) Next, reverse and raise your chin toward the ceiling as you tilt your head up and back. Hold for one breath. Then, slowly nod forward and backward through a series of breaths.

3 & 4) Return to neutral and slowly make circles with your neck, rolling in a clockwise fashion. Start small and slowly work into larger circles, always moving slowly through each rotation.

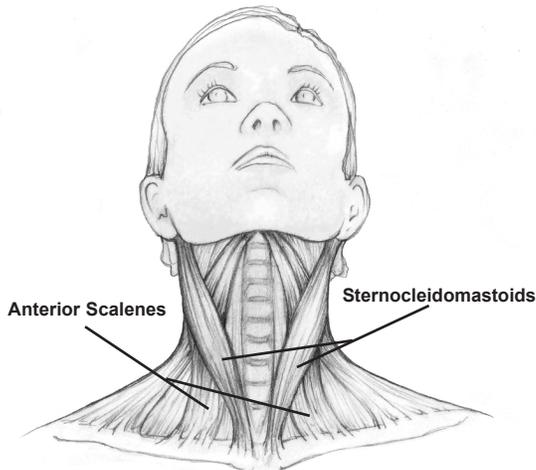
Breathe: Take deep consistent breaths while moving through these routines.

Reverse: Allow your head to gradually stop before reversing in counterclockwise circles.

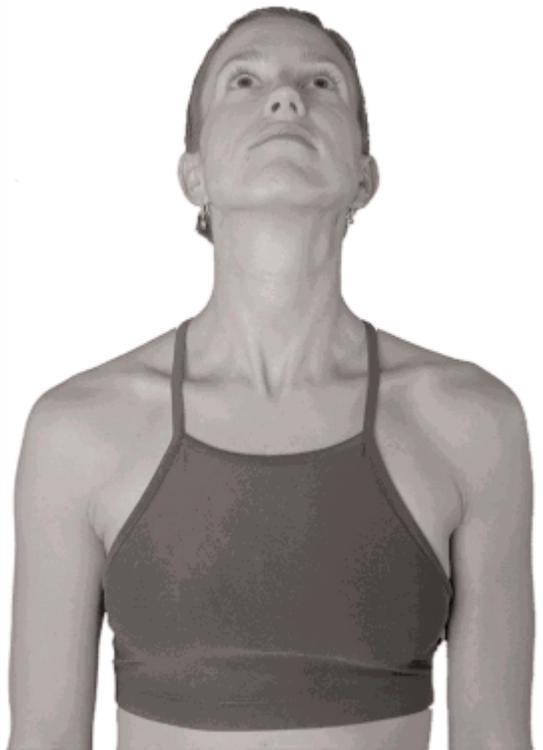
MUSCLES STRETCHED: This is a great warm-up stretch for all neck muscles.

CAUTION!!! Be sure to warm up by moving slowly throughout the routine and allow your neck to relax. If you feel pain in your neck, throat or down your back, discontinue this routine.

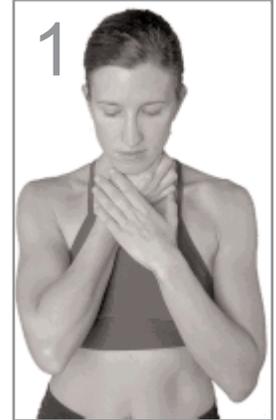
Neck Extension Stretch



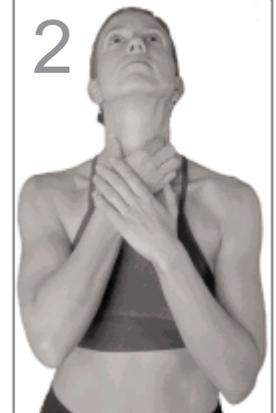
MUSCLES STRETCHED: Anterior neck muscles including the Sternocleido-mastoid (SCM), anterior scalenes and deep neck stabilizers including the “hyoid” & “thyroid” muscles.



1) Sit or stand with your right hand around your neck and your fingers and thumb on the muscles on either side of your throat. You may place your left hand on top of your right for support as shown. Start with your hands close to your chin and begin with your chin at your chest (fig. 1).



2) Slowly bend your neck backward as you simultaneously slide your hands toward your chest, stretching the muscles on the front of your neck.



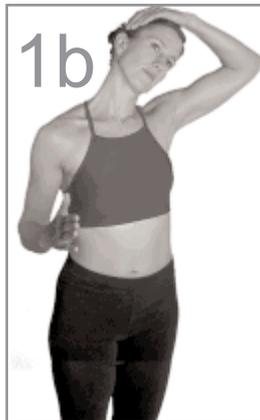
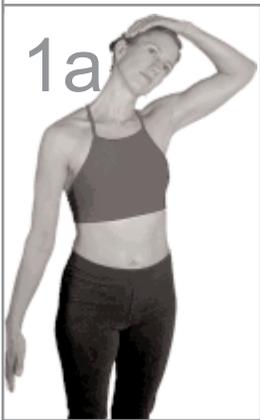
Breathe: Hold this stretch for 3 deep breaths. Relax into each exhale while releasing tension and stretching a little further.

CAUTION!!! Hand placement is VERY important! Be careful not to put too much pressure directly on your throat. Instead focus on the muscles on the sides of your throat.

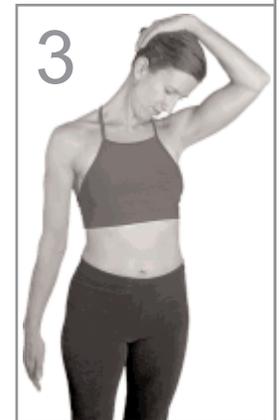
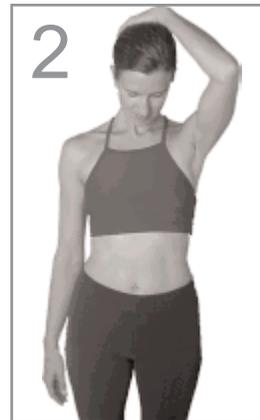
Why do this stretch?

If you find yourself slouching or feel like your chin hangs too far forward, chances are that the muscles in the front of your neck are short and tight. This stretch will help lengthen them.

Neck Lateral Flexion Stretch



AT YOUR DESK:
If sitting at a chair with an armrest, point your right elbow toward the floor to anchor your shoulder (fig. 1b).



1) Sit or stand with good posture. Continue looking forward as you extend your neck up toward the sky, then tip your left ear toward your left shoulder. Think of reaching up and to the left and avoid “crunching” your left side. Use your left hand to gently pull your neck toward your left shoulder. Actively point your right fingers (fig. 1a) or elbow (fig. 1b) downward toward the floor to anchor your shoulder.

Breathe: Hold this stretch for 3 deep breaths. Relax into each exhale while releasing tension and stretching a little further.

Reverse: Reverse and stretch the opposite side.

PNF Stretch: (stretch-resist-stretch)

To increase muscle length, follow these steps: While continuing to maintain position #2 (or while exploring angles) in just shy of a fully stretched position, gently resist stretch. Once resistance is achieved, do not create any movement. Hold for 3 deep breaths, relax for 2 seconds without resistance and then stretch as described in steps #1-#3.

2) Now explore changing the angle of your stretch by moving your right shoulder back slightly and your left hand toward the back of your head. Pull forward at this new angle and feel the stretch move to the back of your neck.

3) Slowly stretch the entire side and back of your neck by creating a number of different diagonal positions.

MUSCLES STRETCHED: All lateral and some posterior neck muscles, especially the scalenes, upper trapezius and levator scapulae.

