

MUSCLE SPASM



Muscle spasm is a painful tightening of the muscle of an area of the body. This is either caused by injury or more commonly by stress that has no outlet. The normal response to stress is to tighten up the muscles in anticipation of a flight to safety. In that we evolved into creatures that don't run for cover as we encounter situations that greatly stress us, this tension provokes the primitive reflex, but not any vigorous physical action. This is why so many persons with highly stressful jobs exercise. They are allowing their body to rid itself of the excess tension which otherwise would go

unabated. Reducing stresses in your life will accomplish the same end, but frequently this is not a realistic option. Some find relief in meditation and other creative outlets. Make time for you to decompress!!!

Your body is crying out for an outlet for this stress. Your body had no recourse but to put all this tension into those aching muscles. This should be enough of a motivation for you to find ways of reducing the stress. TODAY you want relief for a very sore and tender muscle. This will take between 1-2 weeks. Your body is not going to let you forget this time of tension or injury!

- HEAT is helpful but seldom curative.
- MASSAGE the affected muscles – It's helpful, but don't overdo it.
- STRETCHING while the muscles are injured or in spasm is generally not helpful for the neck. This can actually be harmful and prolong your suffering. Never exercise the neck, even when it is better. The neck gets exercise and there is no need to subject it to more stretching. This is a frequently aggravating problem that will go away without exercise. The back is different and once recovered, exercising your back will help considerably.
- ACETAMINOPHEN (Tylenol) – may help the pain.
- ASPIRIN – in addition to helping the pain will reduce some of the inflammation.
- IBUPROFEN (Motrin) – is frequently prescribed to help reduce the inflammation, this is a bit stronger than aspirin and may irritate the stomach.
- MUSCLE RELAXANTS like methocarbamol (Robaxin) – These will provide some relief during your recovery. But also have the side effects of making you sleepy. If you need a very clear head for work, you will probably dislike the kind of feeling that all of these medicines give you, even if you took the last one the night before.

Time is the real key. While recovering, you must find a better way to cope with some of your stresses, and if possible reduce them. Baby yourself. Go to a movie, take a long hot bath, and get a few extra hours of sleep each night. When finally recovered you may slowly resume your normal activities. Don't push yourself! Now is the time to gradually move into an exercise routine, both stretching and aerobics. Use proper body mechanics and look for ways you can better treat your spine. Know the limitations of your body!

If you recover and sense it coming on again, cancel the night's activities, take two ibuprofen, take a hot bubble bath and head to bed early! If you anticipate a stressful week ahead, ramp up the exercises especially aerobic to give all that stress a healthier outlet than tormenting your neck.

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