



PHYSICAL THERAPY  
WELLNESS CENTER  
PELVIC HEALTH



# IS STRESS THE CAUSE OF YOUR NECK PAIN?

Do you notice your neck seems to hurt more when you are stressed? Do you find yourself rubbing your neck after a difficult day on the job? You might be suffering from stress-related neck pain. During times of high stress and anxiety, our muscles tense up. As muscles tighten, the more pressure and pain they cause.

The pain and tension can interfere with our ability to work and do our daily activities. It can also interfere with the enjoyment of your life including recreational activities and spending time with friends and family.

The good news is that with guidance from your physical therapist you can find solutions to your pain and how to manage your stress, so you can get back to living the life you enjoy!

Call G3 Physical Therapy today to learn how we can help you to keep living the kind of life you want with less pain.

## What Is Causing My Neck Pain?

Our neck does not like to remain in any one position for extended periods, like when we're driving, looking down at

our phone, or using a computer. Too often the posture we hold our neck in is also contributing to our pain.

Prolonged sitting can lead to rounded shoulders and "hunched over" posture, which leads to a forward head position that results in tension and change in blood flow to the soft tissues (i.e. muscles, tendons, and ligaments) of the neck, upper back, and shoulders.

Like all muscles and tendons, the muscles of our neck, shoulders, and upper back function best when we move them, which shortens and lengthens the tissues, facilitating healthy blood flow. So holding our head in one position leads to irritation of the muscles and affects our ability to move our head, shoulders, upper back, and neck. This loss of mobility leads to pain and less enjoyment of our daily activities.

## How Does Stress Cause Neck Pain?

Stress-induced neck pain is fairly common. The effects of stress on the body include the release of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, that when elevated for

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# FIND RELIEF WITH G3 PHYSICAL THERAPY!

long durations, are associated with increased pain sensitivity. The more stress we experience the more likely we will also experience pain.

While chronic stress alone can trigger neck pain, a few factors can make it worse. Office and workstation environments tend to create neck pain problems. Modern offices confine people to chairs, poor posture, and little mobility.

In addition, a lot of people also spend a lot of time driving with poor posture and added stress due to traffic. The combination of all of these factors makes your chances of stress-related neck pain higher.

## How Physical Therapy Can Help My Neck Pain

Neck pain can be alleviated with physical therapy. Neck pain is often caused by poor postural habits or sustained positions. Relief of this pain typically occurs immediately following the correction of the abnormal postures. An easy way to find good posture is to imagine your breast bone is lifted towards the sky. This will naturally cause your spine to straighten out – lifting you. This helps alleviate the tension immediately and is something you can do multiple times of day!

Our physical therapists can target your pain's source by examining your symptoms. Then, they can offer exercises that stretch and/or relax your shoulder, upper back, and neck muscles.

For example, get out of your chair and stand with your feet shoulder width apart, and swing both arms overhead as you reach for the ceiling while looking straight ahead. Repeat ten times. Then, extend your arms straight in front of you and swing both arms as far to the right as you can, then as far to the left as you can, all while looking straight ahead. Repeat ten times. These exercises get your shoulder, upper back, and neck muscles moving, increasing blood flow, and getting the “kinks” out of those muscles, which takes pressure off your neck.

In some cases, manual techniques including mobilizations or therapeutic massage are used to alleviate your pain and allow you to tolerate stretching. A custom-tailored program of neck exercises will assure your neck stays loose, limber, and healthy.

Your physical therapist can also teach you how to arrange your working environment ergonomically and recommend various stress reduction strategies to ensure healthy life behavior.

## Contact Our Clinic Today

If you're dealing with neck pain, you're not alone. Call our office today, and schedule an assessment. Even if your neck pain is caused by stress, it still needs attention. We'll work side by side with your goals, creating the proactive, effective programs you need to achieve mobility once more. We offer the results you are looking for!

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# STAFF SPOTLIGHT: KRISTEN CERNA, DACM, LAC



We are excited to introduce acupuncture at G3. Kristen Cerna, DACM, LAc. will be available on Mondays and Wednesdays 12-4pm. Please call G3 Physical Therapy at (760)452-2640 to schedule an appointment. To learn more about Kristen, check out what she has to say...

I am a licensed acupuncturist passionate about easing pain and accelerating healing, to get you back to doing the things you love most in life. I use acupuncture and herbal medicine to provide safe, effective, and natural healthcare solutions to address a wide range of health concerns. I often incorporate complimentary modalities such as cupping, tui na massage, and moxa in my holistic approach to healthcare that focuses on the root cause of health issues, rather than just treating isolated symptoms.

I earned my Doctorate (DACM) and Masters (MSTOM) degrees at Pacific College of Health and Science in San Diego. During my 3,000 hours of didactic and clinical training I completed internships at the PCHS clinic with emphasis on pain management, orthopedic disorders, women's health and fertility, and pediatrics. I also completed an externship at Integrative Health Nights, a nonprofit community clinic for underserved populations, and pursued additional training in treatment of orthopedic disorders, Japanese acupuncture, face reading, and sports tui na. My clinical interests include: orthopedics, sports injury, pain management (acute and chronic), sleep issues, women's health and gastrointestinal disorders.

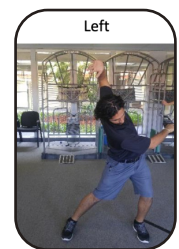
My interest in Chinese Medicine grew out of my study of yoga movement and breathwork, and a desire to utilize natural medicine for my own healthcare. I learned that we can only be as healthy as our internal emotional environment and our external surroundings. I further explored this concept on a personal growth challenge as I backpacked from Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail in a five month journey. During that time I learned more about myself, my needs as a human, the power of community, and the beauty of the world. I incorporate these learnings into my practice of Chinese Medicine with lifestyle guidance and exercises.

To healing and health,

Kristen Cerna, DACM, LAc.

## EXERCISE OF THE MONTH

### SIDE LATERAL CHAIN



You might not have realized how having shoulder and upper back mobility can help your neck stiffness and pain. These movements are an example of how integrating your whole body can make all the difference in being able to successfully return to your sport or activity. Call G3 Physical Therapy to learn how to safely regain mobility and strength again.

## WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR SUCCESS STORY!

Click below to tell your PT story and leave your review. We look forward to hearing from you!



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