

Head & Neck Cancer Team

Exercises following a neck dissection

You may experience aching and stiffness in your neck and shoulder after your surgery. You can teach yourself neck and shoulder exercises to help you regain ease of movement. You can begin these after drain removal. Start off gently, and continue to until a satisfactory range of motion is restored.

Neck and shoulder movements will be limited, and may be weak, after the surgery because of:

- swelling
- the presence of drains
- surgical clips

You will usually notice improvements when the swelling reduces and the drains and clips are removed. However, the amount of flexibility you can achieve depends on the extent of the surgery performed.

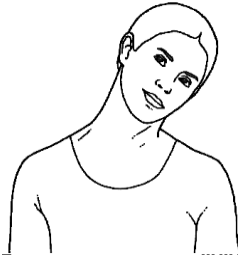
These exercises are best done:

- gently at first, with a few repetitions each time
- regularly during the day.

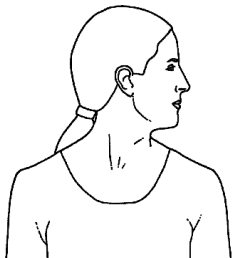
Doing too many repetitions may make you very sore. Your body will tell you if you are doing too much.



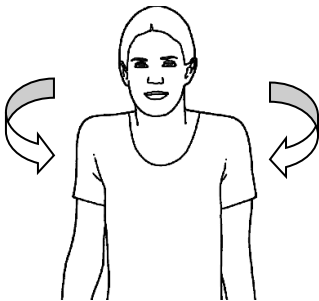
Patient Information



In a sitting position, tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side. Hold approximately 5 seconds. **Repeat 5 times to either side.**



In a sitting position, turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold approximately 5 seconds. **Repeat 5 times to either side**



In a sitting or standing position, lift and roll your shoulders forwards, then backwards alternately. **Repeat 10 times.**



In a sitting position, lift your arm up forwards, letting your thumb lead the way. **Repeat 5 times.**

Patient Information



In a sitting position, lift your arm up sideways with your thumb leading the way. **Repeat 5 times.**

Contact your Macmillan skin cancer nursing team on **024 7696 6085** if you have any questions or are experiencing any problems after your surgery.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the Plastic Surgery Department on **024 7696 5225** and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



Document History

Department:	Head and neck
Contact:	25225
Updated:	July 2023
Review:	July 2025
Version:	4
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1968/15