



Wry Neck

Have you ever suddenly cricked your neck and found your head to be stuck in an uncomfortable position? Or maybe you've found yourself to be sitting in a draught and the following day your neck is stiff and painful?

Lastly have you woken up in the morning to find for no apparent reason that you are unable to move your neck? Maybe this has happened when you have been on holiday or staying at a friend's house and you have not been sleeping with your usual pillows?

A wry neck or Acute Torticollis is the term applied when there has been a sudden onset of pain resulting in the head being in a "cock robin" position, usually side bent and rotated to one side. You can be side bent and rotated towards the side of pain or away from the side of pain.

The cause is generally unknown, but other precipitating factors, besides those mentioned above, can be a minor muscle strain or occasionally a sore throat or infection of the pharynx.

Associated neurological symptoms are rare.

Attempts to move your neck after this has happened seem to generate more pain and spasm.

Any vigorous manipulative techniques can also make the problem more severe. We have treated a lot of patients suffering from a wry neck at the Wye Physiotherapy Practice.

We have found that the most successful way of solving the problem is to lie the patient on his back with his head comfortably positioned with one or two pillows. We then encourage GENTLE oscillatory movements rolling the supported head from side to side. Patients are then encouraged to continue this at home, combined with taking painkillers/anti-inflammatories (if prescribed) and applying heat to the area in the form of a wheat bag or hot water bottle.

Usually, the problem will resolve after a couple of days. (Failure of this condition to respond rapidly usually means further investigation is required.) We are also able to give preventative advice such as how to achieve good spinal posture when sitting at a desk or driving or during daily activities. We also have many suggestions on how to arrange pillows at night time to ensure there is no recurrence of the problem.