

Neck Stretch

Level 1 / Posture 60

Benefits: Increases flexibility of neck & shoulders

Time to Do: 1 – 3 minutes

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Neck; Upper Back

Good Before: Many postures including any that stretch or strengthen the spine, neck or shoulders, especially Shoulder Stand, Plow, Bust Expansion, Chest Expansion, Rabbit, Lion

Good After: Lion, Posture Clasp, Cobra

Builds You Up for: Neck Stretch; Neck Rolls; postures that require strength & flexibility in the upper back, neck & shoulders.

Combines Well With: Cobra, Lion, Neck Stretch, Neck Rolls, Toe Stretches, Eye Stretches, Posture Clasp

Energy Center Used: Throat center

Do Not Do This Pose If: You've had neck injuries. For some people with neck injuries, this stretch is very helpful – but for others it can make things worse. Check with your Doctor first!



You'll enjoy this stretch if you do a lot of desk work or if you keep a lot of your tension in your neck. It's refreshing, quick and can be done anywhere.

Yoga Snack

This is a great office break; and a good one to do when you're stuck in traffic.

© 2002 Corinne Friesen www.audioyoga.com

Start

Sitting
Arms by your sides

OR Start

Sitting at a table / desk.
Elbows on the desk.

OR Start

Lying on your back,
Your neck & spine & legs lined up with each other.

Round 1 – the Forward Neck Stretch

Bring your chin to your chest – just as you did during the Neck Press

**Discovery**

Feel exactly where the stretch begins & ends in your neck and shoulders. See if you can feel exactly which muscles are involved in the stretch.

Hold for 6 – 20 breaths

or until you have reached your limit, plus one extra breath. As you breathe out, feel your shoulders dropping and relaxing. Allow your chin to follow your chest down as you're letting go of your breath, gradually increasing the stretch.

**Option – Add the Neck Press**

Cup the back of your head with your hands.
Gently press down on the back of your head.
This will increase the stretch in the neck.

Hold for 6 – 20 breaths

or until you have reached your limit, plus one extra breath.

Warning: Do not press so hard that the stretch becomes painful!
Watch Out for pain or burning in your neck. If you feel this, you're pressing too hard on your head. Ease the pressure on your head.

Tip Pressing down on your head is meant to be a gentle pressure.

Release the Forward Neck Stretch

Do this by reversing your movements.

Wait for the muscles in your neck to completely let go of the stretch before you continue with Round 2.

Round 2

Bring your head to your left side.
Do this by bringing your left ear toward your left shoulder.

You will feel this in the right side of your neck.

Hold for 6 – 20 breaths

or until you have reached your limit, plus one extra breath.

Key As you breathe out, feel your shoulders dropping and relaxing. Allow your ear to follow your shoulders down as you're letting go of your breath, gradually increasing the stretch.



Release by reversing your movements, returning your head upright.

Wait for the muscles in your neck to completely let go of the stretch before you continue with Round 3.



Round 3

Bring your head to your right side.
Do this by bringing your right ear toward your right shoulder.

You will feel this in the right side of your neck.

Hold for 6 – 20 breaths

or until you have reached your limit, plus one extra breath.

Again, the key is to let your shoulders drop and relax with every breath out. Allow your ear to follow your shoulders down as you're letting go of your breath, gradually increasing the stretch.

Common Errors

- Twisting the neck
- Starting out with neck & back crooked, (not lined up with each other)
- Over-stretching.

Why not combine the Neck Stretch with the Neck Press and Neck Rolls for a refreshing mini-routine.

Breathing

Breathe in

Breathe out, going into the stretch

Hold Breathe in & out 6 – 20 times or until you've reached your limit plus one extra breath.

Release

Breathe in

Breathe out, raising head up (& returning limbs to starting position)