



Damage Control For

Acute Back and Neck Pain



Edgemont Chiropractic Clinic

Damage Control For Acute Back and Neck Pain

Keep moving

Too much rest will stiffen joints, weaken muscles, delay healing and disconnect some of the brain neuropathways to and from the muscles. Move your body in as many ways and directions you can think of.



Limit sitting

Get up and move for a couple of minutes after every 20–30 minutes of sitting. Change your posture frequently

Don't hold stretches

Your nervous system is tightening your muscles to protect you. Don't rile them up and make them mad, they'll tighten even more. Keep moving in all directions but don't hold a stretch position for more than 5 seconds. You can repeat the 5 second hold up to ten times after a brief period (3 seconds) of relaxation. Again, move in as many ways and positions you can think of. Be creative.



Avoid prolonged massage

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Avoid prolonged massage over the area. A few minutes of gentle massage is helpful, but remember those muscles are tight to protect you, so don't overdo it and make those muscles too relaxed.



No yoga, Pilates or gym classes for a few days.

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Be mindful of medication use.

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Over the counter medications for inflammation and pain may be helpful. They work best when taken on a regular schedule (a few times a day – check product instructions and warnings) but only for a couple of days. Using them for too long will delay healing.



Use ice for the first 48 hours

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If you used heat, don't worry, it won't necessarily make you any worse. Research is still unclear regarding which is better, ice or heat. Use what feels best to you. Whichever you use, the 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off and 15 minutes on schedule works well. Then repeat every 2 hours. Remember, never put an ice pack directly on the skin – it can burn – wrap ice in a moist towel before applying.



Walk

Walk for 5–10 minutes, at least three times daily.

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Rest

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Periodically lie on your back with a small pillow under your knees and a small pillow under your head for 10–15 minutes. Don't rest your neck on a thick pillow.



Sleep

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Sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees. You can use a thicker pillow for under your neck.



Use topical ointments



Most of these ointments act as counter-irritants. They stimulate the nerves to feel the hot/cool sensations and may block some of the pain signals.

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Abdominal breathing

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If you have lower back pain, lie on your stomach and perform deep breaths into your belly. Feel your stomach push down into the floor and your lower back rise up slightly. Try not to raise your upper chest and shoulders with each breath. If it's your neck that's sore, lie on your back with a small pillow under your neck. Relax and breathe! Do this for at least 5 minutes every hour.



Keep hydrated

Drink plenty of water.

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