

## **Common “Pain Makers” Causing Pain in Neck and Arm? How to Get Rid of Them?**

The goal of this program is simple. We want to help you decrease the amount of neck and arm pain you are experiencing each day. One way in which to do this is decrease the number of “pain makers” you are exposed in each day.

In our world, a pain maker is an action, a position, or thing that causes pain. The pain can be in your neck. Or it may be “referred” pain. That is pain that originates from a structure in your neck but refers to some other place in your body (shoulder blade, upper trapezius, arm, hand, etc.).

If you perform a task and you begin to feel pain-that task is a pain maker. If you move a certain way and it causes pain that movement is a pain maker. If you are lying in bed on your back and you have pain, that position is a pain maker.

For many of you these pain makers occur throughout the day and severely limit what you can do. We want you to change that.

Reduce the pain makers in your day and you begin to reduce the sensitivity of your nerves to pain. It has a cascade effect both ways. Increase pain from pain makers- increase nerve pain sensitivity. Decrease pain from pain makers and decrease nerve pain sensitivity. People are surprised to learn the way they move and activate muscles can eliminate pain.

By reducing pain makers, you begin to see you can control the pain in your life. It does not have to control you.

The less pain makers you have, the more you can do.

### *THE INITIAL RULES*

Things you may need to stop doing NOW.

We understand that some of the activities on this list may be important to you. We are not asking for you to give them up forever. We are just asking for you to stop them right now so we can reduce your pain makers. You will be able to return to some in the future, and we will try to provide guidance.

1. Looking down continuously while reading, knitting, performing desk duties, etc.

2. Looking down continuously at a phone, laptop, project, etc.
3. Placing your neck in a forward head posture.
4. Sleeping on your stomach.
5. Sleeping on your back with the wrong number of pillows.
6. Sleeping on your side with the wrong number of pillows.
7. Sitting in a slumped rounded posture.
8. Viewing a screen or TV placed incorrectly (especially over a long period of time). An example would be a screen that is positioned off to your right, so you are unable to view straight on.
9. Cycling with a head down posture.
10. Driving with an incorrect posture.
11. Running (only if it increases your pain while doing).
12. Sporting activities (only if they increase your pain while doing).
13. Lifting weights (only if it increases your pain while doing).
14. Working in cramped or awkward spaces with the neck in a static position.
15. Tilting your head (out of habit) in the same direction on a frequent and continual basis. For example, tilting your head to the right when writing or typing.
16. Avoid shopper's tilt. Shopper's tilt occurs when you carry against just one side of your body for a prolonged period. You should try to keep the weight evenly distributed - between two shopping bags - and close to your body.
17. Avoid traveler's droop. If you develop neck pain from carrying a heavy suitcase at the airport and felt neck pain later, you have experienced traveler's droop. Consider using a backpack, worn properly in the middle of the upper back, or invest in a suitcase on wheels.

*Final Thoughts on Pain and Pain Makers*

You do not try to work through pain makers. You can work up to the point of pain but then you need to back down.

Remember - the more you experience pain, the more sensitive your nerves become. The more sensitive your nerves become, the easier it is for you pain makers to trigger pain.

Luckily, the reverse is also true. The more you can eliminate pain makers the less sensitive your nerves become.

We do not believe your pain is “all in your head”. Just because no one has been able to pinpoint the cause of your pain does not mean your pain is not real.

Every pain maker you eliminate is a personal victory and should be viewed as so.

Constant exposure to pain makers may be preventing your body (back) from fully healing. Your body has an incredible ability to heal. If you let it. If you are feeling pain, you might be re-irritating your neck with incorrect moves and postures.

Exercises we recommend are solely designed as an end goal to help you manage or eliminate pain makers.

Pain does not always equate with severity of injury. The common thought is that “I am in a lot of pain so something in my neck must really be damaged bad”. Not true. Your nerves may have just become oversensitive to pain because of continuous exposure to pain makers. They will calm down once you start managing the pain makers.

Only you, and you alone, can manage your pain makers. Yes, they can be managed. Yes, the amount of pain you experience during a day can be reduced. But you must do it. You are in charge. Nobody is going to come to your rescue. You must decide “I can do this, and I will do this!”