

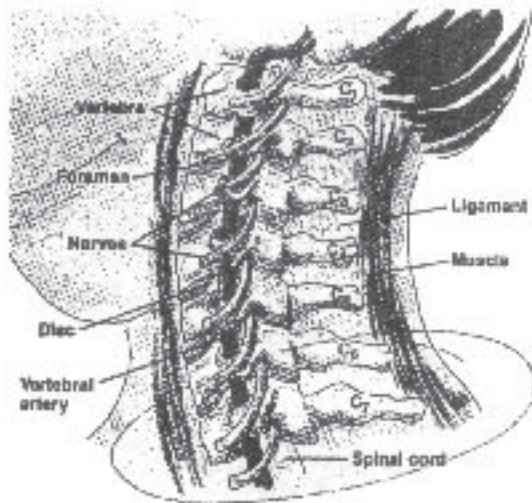
THE CERVICAL SPINE



BACK VIEW



SIDE VIEW



SIDE VIEW

ADVICE TO MINIMISE STRESS TO THE NECK

Never sleep on your stomach, as lying with the neck twisted is harmful.

If you sleep on your back use a soft pillow which you can mould to support the hollow of your neck. Do not use a thick pillow which would tilt the chin downwards.

If you sleep on your side, double the pillow over to ensure that your head remains level and does not tilt towards your shoulder.

Do not do neck exercises. They are not necessary and may stress the neck muscles.

Each morning and evening and at any time when you may have stressed your neck. (E.g. working with your head tilted down) take a few moments to check your neck for sensitive spots and ease them in the way your BSR practitioner has shown you.

Beware of a backwash at the hairdresser - insist on having a rolled-up towel between your neck and the edge of the basin.

THE NECK



Unlocking tension - Restoring self-healing

BODY STRESS RELEASE

Stress becomes locked into physical structures when the body fails to adapt to an overload of stress.

Body Stress Release is concerned with assisting the body to release stored tension, thereby allowing it to maximise its in-built ability to maintain and heal itself. The causes of tension may be mechanical, mental/emotional or chemical factors.

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THE STRUCTURE

In the cervical spine there are 7 vertebrae, forming a natural forward curve. The vertebral bodies are joined by the inter-vertebral discs which have a tough outer rim of cartilage and a jelly-like centre. The discs act as shock absorbers. The spinal nerves exit from the spinal cord through openings (foramina) between the vertebrae, and supply the skin and muscles of the shoulders, arms and hands.

THE CAUSES OF BODY STRESS

MECHANICAL CAUSES

Jarring or jerking the neck as in a fall or a whiplash in a car accident; working or reading with the head tilted downwards for lengthy periods; twisting the neck as in reversing a car.

MENTAL/EMOTIONAL CAUSES

Emotions like intense anger, anxiety or shock, which cause a person to hunch the shoulders and tighten the neck muscles. A state of ongoing depression will also bring about postural distortions.

In addition, the physical discomfort resulting from the body stress will reinforce the negative emotions and lead to a vicious circle.



Poor posture may stress the neck!

CHEMICAL CAUSES

Exposure to harmful chemicals may severely irritate the nervous system and cause the neck muscles to tighten, e.g. chemicals which we inhale, such as car fumes and insecticides; substances which we absorb through the skin, such as cleaning materials and certain cosmetics. Some people, react adversely to certain foods and to preservatives and colourants. Very often an infection, such as the flu or cold virus, will result in neck stress.

THE EFFECTS OF BODY STRESS

The body stress stored in the neck structures may cause pain and stiffness and an inability to fully turn the head. As the lower neck supplies the nerves to the arms, there may be pain or numbness in the shoulder, arm or hand. Muscles may be weakened, resulting in difficulty in grasping objects. The tension in the neck may cause headaches or pain in the face or jaw. There may be sensations of dizziness or nausea. The pressure may irritate nerve pathways which connect with the eyes, nose and mouth and this could adversely affect vision and the senses of smell and taste. Another effect may be a burning, dry mouth or excess saliva. Body stress in the neck area may also have an impact on nerve connections to internal organs, such as the heart, lungs and digestive system, undermining normal function.

TRUE CASES

A woman of 28 had been experiencing almost constant headaches for 6 months, as well as a stiff and painful neck. She had 2 sessions of BSR. After each one, the pain withdrew but returned within a day. Detailed questioning revealed that she had started using a new skin cream about 6 months before. She stopped using it, and after one further session of BSR her neck stabilised and the headaches ceased.

A man of 42 complained of numbness in his arms, pins and needles in his fingers, and weakness of the hands. Body stress was released in his neck over 3 sessions. He reported that full sensation and strength had returned to his arms a week later.

A woman in her thirties had suffered from frequent attacks from asthma since a neck whiplash in a car accident, four months previously. After three sessions of BSR full movement was restored to her neck and all symptoms of asthma had ceased.

