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Side of the Neck Crunch:

Strengthening exercise for the Scalene Muscle(s).

Body Position - How do I get into position?

Lay on your side (Image 1). Pull your underside shoulder underneath your body to prop you up and allow your head to tip toward the downside shoulder. Tip or lay your body and shoulder back but only slightly.



Performance - How do I correctly do the exercise?

Lift your head up off the table and bring your upside ear toward the upside shoulder (Image 2). Avoid sideways movements of your chin. It should be a windshield wiper type of motion. Hold at the top for a second then slowly lower your head down until it rests. Perform this exercise for the required number of round/sets and repetitions. It is most common to start by doing 2 sets of 2-3 repetitions.



Perform the exercise on both sides.

Frequency - How often?

Do this exercise every day. This makes it easier to remember to do the exercise and develop a routine. That said, it is good to take a day off here and there to allow the muscles to recover. The more you increase the sets, reps and/or load, the less often the exercise needs to be performed.

Timing - When do I do it?

It is most ideal to do the exercise at night before bed as it may fatigue your neck, may aggravate your symptoms or may create a new issue. The more you work on this exercise, the less it will fatigue your neck. At this point you can fit it into your schedule at any time during the day.

Progression - How do I make it harder?

Progress to 2 sets of 3 repetitions, 2 sets of 4 reps, 3 sets of 3 reps, 3 sets of 4-6 reps.

This will occur as your body adapts. It is better to progress slowly. Progressing too quickly can aggravate the muscles and set you back.

Once you achieve 3 sets of 3-4 reps and feel that the exercise is getting easier, you can begin to add resistance to your head by placing a weight on your head (ex: soft weight or a foam roller). It is best to add 1 lb. at a time and progress from there over a period of time until you get to 3-5 lbs.

Note - What is the crunching I feel in my neck?

The noise you hear can be muscle or joint creptius (crackling and creaking under the skin that is often harmless). If it is of concern, please consult your healthcare professional.