

# Tips on Relief for a Stiff Neck

*Endoscopic Spine Surgeon Dr. Kaixuan Liu with Atlantic Spine Center shares pointers for relieving neck pain.*

WEST ORANGE, NJ, UNITED STATES, October 4, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Few ailments are both as common and as frustrating as having a stiff neck. At any given time, neck pain affects more than 2% of the population (<https://rb.gy/ej7e4>). Due to its tendency to come and go, it's an experience most people are all too familiar with. While having a stiff neck can be irritating, there's no shortage of ways people can help relieve it at home. [Dr. Kaixuan Liu, endoscopic spine surgeon](#) and founder of [Atlantic Spine Center](#) has a number of tips for improving the symptoms of a stiff neck, as well as information about when it might be time to seek professional assistance.



Dr. Kaixuan Liu

"A stiff neck can be the result of a variety of differing causes, from the simple to the dramatic, and that's going to be reflected in the remedies. Luckily, most stiff necks are of the simple variety, and they can be relieved with conservative treatments," said Dr. Liu.

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*Dr. Kaixuan Liu*

The first way to treat a stiff neck is to rest. Putting additional strain on muscles, tendons, ligaments, and other tissues in the neck can lead to inflammation, increased pain, and a longer recovery time.

“Fortunately, most stiff necks do resolve on their own after

a few days to a week,” said Dr. Liu.

When the stiffness is new, icing with cold packs can bring short-term pain relief while also reducing inflammation which can aid in faster healing.

After a few days have passed and the initial swelling has gone down, applying heat can promote increased blood flow to the affected area, which may feel soothing. This can be done using a heating pad or by taking a warm bath. An Epsom salt bath could also provide relief to stiff neck

muscles.

Over-the-counter medications can also be used to reduce pain and inflammation from a stiff neck. These include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as:

- aspirin
- ibuprofen
- naproxen

Other over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen might help with pain relief but won't address the inflammation. Medications may come with side effects, and they can also interfere with other medications or other medical conditions, so it's important to check with a doctor about drug interactions and safety before taking a new medication.

When used conservatively, a neck collar can also provide some relief for a stiff neck. This device prevents excessive neck movement while also taking the weight of the head off of the neck muscles so they can rest. A neck collar should not be overused though. Check with a medical professional on the proper use of a neck collar.

If a stiff neck is persistent or adversely affecting everyday activities, a specialist such as a physical therapist may be able to recommend a series of stretches and exercises that can safely be performed to relieve neck strain and prevent future a stiff neck in the future.

"One of the best ways to improve a stiff neck is to prevent it in the first place. A number of small lifestyle adjustments can help to aid in longer periods of have a pain- and stiffness-free neck," Dr. Liu said.

Many people notice a stiff neck upon waking one morning, and the cause of these stiff necks is often related to sleeping position. Healthy sleeping habits and conditions can promote musculoskeletal health. This might include:

- evaluating mattress condition and firmness
- having an appropriate pillow for body size and sleeping position
- avoiding tummy sleeping

Improper posture during daily activities can also be a major contributor to neck pain and stiffness. A frequent source of neck stiffness is prolonged and frequent periods of looking down. This might happen while using a phone screen or while working on a computer. This cause of neck stiffness might be avoided by:

- adjusting chair height
- adjusting desk or monitor height
- keeping feet flat on the floor
- keeping thighs parallel to the floor
- regularly standing and walking

Less commonly, a stiff neck can be a symptom of something more serious. Some conditions that can cause a stiff neck include:

- rheumatoid arthritis
- meningitis
- cancer
- slipped disk
- bone spurs

"If someone has a stiff neck due to a serious medical condition, there are likely to be other signs. It's important that for neck pain that doesn't go away with conservative treatment, or when combined with other symptoms, people make an appointment with a physician or other medical professional," said Dr. Liu.

Accompanying symptoms that might indicate a serious medical problem can include:

- neurological symptoms
- nausea
- vomiting
- fever
- fatigue
- rash
- sensitivity to light

"It's important to stress that a stiff neck typically means about a week of mild discomfort. Home remedies are a great place to start for finding relief, and preventative measures can also be very effective. If someone is ever concerned about their stiff neck though, consulting with a specialist is always valid route to take," said Dr. Liu.

Kaixuan Liu, MD, PhD, is a board-certified physician who is fellowship-trained in minimally invasive spine surgery. He is the founder of Atlantic Spine Center.

Atlantic Spine Center is a nationally recognized leader for endoscopic spine surgery with several locations in NJ and NYC. [www.atlanticspinecenter.com](http://www.atlanticspinecenter.com)

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