A PAIN IN THE NECK
How to Banish Neck and Shoulder Pain, And Correct Your Posture Easily and Permanently

A Healthy Back Institute® Publication
# Table of Contents

- **Introduction** .................................................................................................................................................4
- **3 Pillars of Health: Body, Mind and Diet** ..................................................................................................4
- **Pillar 1: Body** ................................................................................................................................................6
  - **Forward Head Posture** ........................................................................................................................6
  - **Postural Dysfunctions** ........................................................................................................................7
  - **Self Assessment** ..................................................................................................................................10
  - **Correcting Muscle Imbalances** ........................................................................................................11
  - **13 Ways to Adjust Your Daily Activities** .......................................................................................13
  - **Trigger Point Therapy** ......................................................................................................................16
- **Pillar 2: Mind** ............................................................................................................................................ 19
  - **Is it all in your head?** ......................................................................................................................... 19
  - **4 Neck pain relief tips** ....................................................................................................................... 19
- **Pillar 3: Diet** ..........................................................................................................................................21
  - **Foods that Cause Pain and Inflammation** ....................................................................................23
  - **Foods that Reduce Pain and Inflammation** ....................................................................................23
  - **The Complete Healing Formula** ........................................................................................................26
- **Conclusion: The 1% Solution on the Road to Success** .........................................................................27
- **Resources** ...................................................................................................................................................28
Introduction

Are you feeling pain in your neck or shoulders? If you’ve already seen a back specialist and are still suffering, here’s why.

Our medical system is set up to think of your body in parts. Have a problem with your eyes? Call your optometrist.

Toothache? See the dentist. Pain in your left thumb? Call the left thumb specialist!

Suffering from back pain? Here you have a few choices.

You might visit your doctor, who will likely prescribe an over-the-counter or prescription pain killer, muscle relaxant or anti-inflammatory.

These medications will mask the symptoms for a short time.

They won’t address the root cause of the problem, so you will continue to suffer over the long term.

You might see a physiotherapist, who will prescribe exercises.

An acupuncturist can reduce pain and help your body heal. A chiropractor will adjust your spine, but you will need to keep going back to keep it aligned.

It’s unlikely that any of these health professionals will assess what’s causing your stress that can contribute to pain, or ask what you ate for dinner last night.

That’s where we’re different.

...At the Healthy Back Institute®, we look at your body as a complete system.

3 Pillars of Health: Body, Mind and Diet

Your neck, shoulders and upper back have important jobs. They are responsible for keeping you stable and helping protect organs like your heart and lungs.

Pain in your neck and shoulders can be debilitating. Shooting pains and muscle stiffness can make it unbearable to brush your teeth or turn your head when you drive.

Carrying a heavy back pack, sitting too long in an office chair or feeling stressed can all contribute to neck and back pain.

It’s seldom one single cause. The combination of the food you eat, the emotions you feel and the way you carry your body all play a role in how you feel.

Recovery begins with education. You have to understand what’s causing your pain, then use trial and error to see which solutions work best for you.
A word of caution: If you feel even minor neck pain, you should take it very seriously. Your body is telling you that something is not right. If you fail to address the situation now, it will likely result in more pain and you will have to work much harder and longer to get yourself back into a pain-free state.

This e-book focuses on the three areas that affect the neck and shoulder pain you’re feeling: body, mind and diet.

These are the three pillars of your health.
Forward Head Posture
By Dr. Mark Wiley

Do you suffer from any of these 10 common ailments?

1. Tension-type headaches
2. “Knots” in the back of the neck
3. “Rocks” in the shoulders
4. Sore chest muscles
5. General irritability
6. Poor sleep
7. Temporo-mandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction
8. Chronic achy feeling all over
9. Numbness or tingling in the arms or hands
10. Trigeminal neuralgia (facial pain)

Did you know that all 10 problems are associated with the same underlying cause: Forward Head Posture.

It’s one of the most common posture problems in our modern society. Actually, our modern lifestyle is responsible for it.

Read on to find out why.

How the daily grind is a pain in the neck

Picture this scenario.

You wake up, then sit down to eat breakfast and read the newspaper. You sit in your car to drive to work. You arrive at the office and sit down at a desk.

For the next several hours you sit hunched over a computer, cradle a phone between your neck and shoulder, refer to papers on your desk or sit slouched in meetings.

After a long day, you climb back into your car and sit in traffic on the way home.

You lean over as you prepare dinner, sit down to eat and lean over again to wash dishes.

If you have young children, you feed, bathe and play with them, then put them to bed.

Then you watch TV sprawled on the couch or lying in bed, and go to sleep.
Eight hours later the vicious cycle begins again!

Over time, what’s the result?

Shoulder pain, neck pain, headaches, numbness and tingling in the hands, weakness in the arms and hands, slumped posture, rounded shoulders and a forward head posture.

**It’s not you, it’s your imbalanced lifestyle.**

Our modern lifestyle is very unbalanced. Every day we place our bodies in certain positions to get our work done and take care of tasks. When we drive a car, work on a computer, prepare food at a kitchen counter and take care of young children, our hands are in front of us. These are all “forward postures.” After a while, we become conditioned to these postures.

Your body adapts to the habits, patterns, postures and positions you place them in on a daily basis.

But by repeating these positions, often unconsciously, something happens. The muscles in front of your body become dominantly strong and tight while the muscles of your upper back (around the shoulder blades) become stretched out and weak.

This creates muscle imbalances. You have overdeveloped, tight muscles in one area of your body, while the opposing muscles are weak and stretched out of their normal positions.

**Postural Dysfunctions**

Your relatively heavy head must rest directly on your neck and shoulders, like a golf ball on a tee. Yet most people carry their head stuck out in front of their shoulders, with the ears in line with or in front of the chest.

The first signs of trouble show up in the form of “postural dysfunctions.” You’ll notice this when you see someone with Dowager’s hump, a tilted head or curvature of the spine.

Once a postural dysfunction develops, you can’t go for long this way before you begin to experience problems. That’s why you should never just cover up the pain with drugs or put off addressing the condition. In other words, if you’re in your 40s, don’t wait until your 60s to get help.

Try this analogy: If you drive your car with the wheels out of alignment, the tread on your tires is going to wear out unevenly. If you don’t get an alignment, eventually you’ll have a blowout. The same principle holds true for your neck and other areas of your body.

**Muscle imbalances cause pain**

The upper back, neck and shoulder area has a very complex group of joints and muscles which go through a complex range of motions.
In your body, everything needs to be in balance to function well.

When the muscles in your head and shoulders are pulled out of alignment, it produces uneven stress and causes additional wear and tear on muscles, ligaments, joints, and even the spine.

Over time, your joints become inflamed and the discs may bulge. This tends to irritate the nerves that lead to other parts of the body.

*In the human body, where there is blockage or stagnation, there is pain.*

Pinched nerves, tightened muscles and postural imbalances all cause blood stagnation, which leads to toxic buildup.

Think of a pond where the water has become stagnant. The blockage of free-flowing water leads to stagnant water where nasty things grow.

When we experience pain and discomfort in the shoulders, arms and hands the problem may be in our neck or upper back area.

**Correcting imbalances: the only way to get rid of pain permanently**

If you are already in pain, you can't keep functioning in an abnormal way. You have to identify your imbalances and do specific exercises to correct them so your body can heal.

When your posture is properly aligned, your ankles, knees, hips, shoulders and ears all fall along the same vertical line.

Repeated forward or downward facing head postures create imbalances between the chest and upper back, front and rear shoulders, and front and rear of the neck.

To correct these muscle imbalances, you need to stretch the sides of the torso, front shoulders and neck.

You also need to strengthen the upper back (deltoid, low-traps, rhomboids, teres minor, etc).
Illustration of a Forward Head Posture compared with a neutral spine.

**Caused by Imbalances Between:**
- Chest and Upper Back
- Front and Rear Shoulders
- Front and Rear Neck

**Tight Muscles:**
- Pectorals (Chest)
- Anterior Deltoid (Front shoulder)
- Latissimus Dorsi (Sides of torso)

**Weak Muscles:**
- Posterior Deltoids (Rear Shoulder)
- Rhomboids (Upper Back)
- Mid-Lower Traps (Mid-Upper Back)
- External Rotators (Shoulder Rotators)

**Stretch:** chest, sides of torso, front shoulders, neck

**Strengthen:** upper back (rear deltoid, low-traps, rhomboids, teres minor, etc)
Self Assessment

Before you can make any changes, you need to know what’s causing your neck pain. This starts with an assessment of your body.

Ask someone to take a front and profile picture of you so you can see for yourself how your head, shoulders and body align.

These photos will only be useful if your posture is completely natural and relaxed. If you try to correct your stance, your assessment won’t be accurate.

Here’s how to take the photo:

- Stand barefoot on a hard surface with arms relaxed and by your side.
- If you are male, take it without a shirt. If you are female, wear a jogging bra or tank top.
- Use a plain wall for a background and ensure the room has good lighting, or use a flash.
- Turn the camera to take a full length, vertical photo. Hold it as level as possible.
- Ensure you get your complete body (showing head to toe) in every photo.

Here are the kind of photos to take:

Please use your photos as reference, and compare them to the illustration on the previous page.

To find your muscle imbalances, click here: Find Your Muscle Imbalances

What does your assessment reveal? If you’re now thinking “Oh no, that’s me! I’d better take action...” you’ve come to the right place.
Correcting Muscle Imbalances

Just sit up straight!

If someone tells you to “just sit up straight” you could probably do it – for a few minutes. But you can't consciously maintain that posture throughout the day. It would be a complete distraction, and you’d probably feel very sore.

It’s like telling a depressed person to just smile more, or an overweight person to just eat less.

All imbalances are subconscious, so thinking about sitting up straight is not how you correct the problem.

Instead, you have to correct the imbalances in your muscles by stretching the tight muscles and strengthening the weak ones.

We refer to this as “muscle tone.”

If the “tone” of your chest muscles is stronger than your upper back, it will draw your head forward... and this creates “forward head posture” or FHP.

To correct these imbalances, you need to stretch the tight and dominant muscles of your chest and strengthen the muscle tone of the weak muscles in your back.

This will bring your body back to a more neutral, balanced, stable state and eliminate the chronic irritation that is causing your pain.

Stretch

Try this stretch after you've been working at a computer for a while:
For more neck and shoulder stretches, watch these short videos that can help you right away.

Stretches for Neck Pain

Arm Pain from Poor Posture

View more videos online:
- Neck Pain from Poor Posture
- Shoulder stretches and exercises
- Neck Pain Stretches with a Partner
- Shoulder Pain Stretches with a Partner
Muscle Balance Therapy – an unbalanced approach

Muscle Balance Therapy is an innovative approach to eliminating neck and back pain once and for all.

With muscle balance therapy, you need to do an unbalanced workout to get your body back to balance.

This means you strengthen the weak muscles and stretch the tight, dominant muscles.

Because most general exercise programs are balanced, following them will strengthen the already too strong groups of muscles.

Following these programs, including Yoga and Pilates, could do more harm than good at this point because you don’t want to strengthen your chest – that’s already too strong. You just want to stretch those muscles while strengthening your back muscles.

The goal of muscle balance therapy

The goal of muscle balance therapy is to rebalance the muscles, so that each pair of opposing muscles are as close to “normal” as possible. By evening out the muscle tension between the left and right sides of the body, or between the front and back, the body supports the spine more evenly, automatically improving posture. This allows the vertebrae to move back into position. It takes the pressure off irritated nerves and muscles, eliminating pain.

If you took your assessment photos, you’ll be able to see many of the clues that point to your postural dysfunctions and muscle imbalances.

You want to pinpoint the muscles that are out of balance: which ones are too weak, and which ones are overly strong.

The problem is that we often have a single type of exercise we like to do over and over again. These are often the exercises that are easier for us, because those muscles are already strong. We avoid the exercises that are difficult for us because those muscles are weak.

But if you overdevelop certain muscles without strengthening the opposing pairs, you’ll create or worsen your imbalances.

13 Ways to Adjust Your Daily Activities

The good news is much of our muscle imbalances are the result of our habits, patterns, postures and positions.

By identifying them, you can modify your daily activities so you don’t continue recreating the same problems.

Here are a few simple ways to adjust your daily activities to prevent FHP from taking hold.
in your body - or from returning after you become more balanced.

1. Get a chair that supports your back

The average American spends anywhere from eight to 12 hours a day sitting. If you have an office job, it’s essential to address this ongoing cause of neck and shoulder pain. If you don’t, any steps you take to resolve your pain will be counteracted by poor posture that will cause your pain to continue.

Ideally, your chair should be designed to recline slightly so it prevents you from slouching; only the best ergonomic chairs will do this. Or try the Back Joy, a type of seat cushion that you sit on. It instantly improves your posture and takes pressure off your spine.

2. Adjust your computer screen

Make sure the top of your computer screen is level with your eyes, and about two feet away from your face. You may need to put some books under it to place it at the right level.

3. Avoid slouching on your couch

If you slouch or sit in an uncomfortable position, your muscles and ligaments can become overstretched, fatigued and strained overtime.

Sitting actually puts more pressure on your back than standing, especially when you sit for long periods of time slouched over with your neck craned to see the television. This creates muscle imbalances that cause many cases of back and neck pain.

4. Correct your sleeping posture

From a pain perspective, sleeping on your stomach is one of the worst positions. It forces you to turn your head to one side or the other, virtually guaranteeing that you’ll wake up with a sore and stiff neck.

Sleep on your back, or on your side using pillows for support. Try placing a pillow between your legs or under your knees.

If you’re a devout stomach sleeper, use a soft thin pillow that allows your head and neck to stay in a straight line with your spine.

5. Set up your bed to support your back

Choose a firm mattress with comfortable support. Don’t stack too many pillows, which may strain your neck, keeping your head in the “forward head posture.” You’ll need to
experiment with different pillows to find one that works for you.

6. Healthy weight and exercise

If you’re overweight or obese, losing weight can make it easier for you to improve your posture. So can regular exercise, which strengthens the key muscles you need for correct posture. (see more in the Diet section)

7. Protect your neck from your tablet and mobile phone

Your tablet and mobile phones are media consumption devices, not work computers. They were not meant to be used 8 hours a day. Take frequent breaks to stretch your eyes and your back. Looking down at phones and tablets are some of the ways we develop forward head posture.

8. Don’t slouch when you commute

Do you spend a lot of time driving? If so it’s imperative that your seat is at the proper angle to your steering wheel to avoid back and neck strain. If you slouch forward to drive, muscle imbalances will inevitably result, and these are key underlying factors in many cases of back and neck pain.

9. Carry your backpack or purse properly.

If you carry a backpack, place it squarely over both shoulders to balance the weight. If you carry a heavy purse or duffel bag, sling it diagonally across your body to distribute the weight.

10. Protect your feet from flip-flops

Your favorite summer shoes may not be as innocent as you thought. Flip-flops force you to “hold on” with your toes as you take each step. This actually alters your gait, and can cause issues with your lower legs, knees and hips, leading to back pain.

11. Don’t sit on your wallet

Do you keep your wallet in your back pocket? Sitting on it can throw your spine out of alignment, leading to muscle imbalances and tension that causes back and neck pain. A wallet in your back pocket can also compress your sciatic nerve, leading to sciatica and its related pain in your lower back or legs.

12. Nix the piggyback rides

Carrying your child or grandchild on your shoulders or by piggyback
is practical and fun, but the lifting process can easily strain your back, neck and shoulders. Over time, this simple act can lead to muscle imbalances that cause chronic pain.

13. Tying tight neckties

Men, if your necktie is too tight, it can easily increase muscle tension in your back, neck and shoulders. How tight is too tight? If you can’t slip a finger between your neck and your shirt collar, your tie is too tight.

Trigger Point Therapy

By Steven Hefferon, PTA, CMT

Do you suffer from aching “knots” in your neck, shoulders and arms, your mid and lower back, or even your hips and legs? These knots are also known as “trigger points.”

Trigger points are a type of muscle stiffness. They are the result of tiny contraction knots that develop in muscle and tissue when an area of the body is injured or overworked.

Muscle balances are one of the biggest factors in creating back pain, but trigger points are a little known cause of pain that could be the one thing you have overlooked for years, if not decades.

If you don’t identify and treat the trigger points, they can become a center of irritation and inflammation in your muscles and nerves.

This ongoing inflammation leads to fibrosis, which thickens your connective tissues. Thicker connective tissue is less flexible, leading to a vicious cycle of additional irritation, tension and pain as your body pulls on each trigger point.

Research by Drs. Janet Travell and David Simons, authors of “The Trigger Point Manual,” has shown that trigger points are the primary cause of pain at least 75 percent of the time and are a factor in nearly every painful condition.

Referred pain- where’s it really coming from?

Trigger points may be the source of something called “referred” pain. This means that trigger points typically send their pain to some other place in the body, which is why conventional treatments for pain so often fail.

Many health care practitioners wrongly assume that the problem is located where the pain is. They fail to assess the body correctly to find the cause of your pain.

Trigger points can occur as a result of:
- Muscle trauma from car accidents, falls, sports and work-related injuries
- Muscle strain from repetitive movements at work or play
- Postural strain from standing or sitting improperly for long periods at the computer
- Emotional stress or anxiety
- Allergies
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Inflammation
- Toxins in the environment

A single event can initiate a trigger point, and you can suffer the effects for the rest of your life if that trigger point is not addressed properly.

**Why trigger points cause trouble**

Your body’s instinctive reaction to a harmful event is to protect itself. It does that by altering the way you move, sit or stand, which puts abnormal stress on your muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints.

This produces strength and flexibility imbalances in your muscles, as well as postural dysfunctions throughout your body.

As if that wasn’t enough, your blood flow can become restricted. When that happens, both your peripheral and central nervous systems start to send out “referred” pain signals, making assessment and treatment even trickier.

**Click Here to Learn How to Self Treat Trigger Points from Home**

**How do you know if you have trigger points?**

Everyone has trigger points; the question is degree. If you have lingering pain, tightness or restriction of certain movements, it’s a good bet you are experiencing the effects of a trigger point.

Trigger points may produce symptoms as diverse as dizziness, earaches, sinusitis, nausea, heartburn, false heart pain, heart arrhythmia, genital pain and numbness in the hands and feet.

They can also bring on headaches, neck and jaw pain, low back pain, sciatica, tennis elbow and carpal tunnel syndrome – you name it.

They are the source of joint pain in the shoulder, wrist, hip, knee and ankle that is often mistaken for arthritis, tendinitis, bursitis or ligament injury.
If you think this is overkill, I suggest you read the book “Why We Hurt: A Complete Physical & Spiritual Guide to Healing Your Chronic Pain” by Dr. Greg Fors, in which he explains precisely why so many different conditions are rooted in trigger points.

Here are a few more symptoms you should know about: If you have restless leg syndrome, you have TPs; if your teeth hurt, you have TPs; if your workouts have plateaued, you have TPs; if you have painful menses or irritable bowel syndrome, you have TPs.

**How does Trigger Point Therapy work?**

Simply rubbing the surface of the skin with a massage lotion, a vibrating massager, or using heat, will not change the tissue of a single trigger point. You need sufficient, deep, sustained pressure to the “knotted-up” area.

As you work the Trigger Point, your body will undergo soft tissue release. This will increase blood flow, reduce muscle spasms and break up scar tissue. It will also help remove any build-up of toxic metabolic waste.

At the same time, your body will undergo a neurological release, reducing the pain signals to the brain and resetting your neuromuscular system to restore its proper function. In other words, everything will work again the way it should.

**How long does it take to get relief?**

The length of time it takes to release a trigger point depends on several factors, one of which is how long you have had your trigger point. Other factors include the number of trigger points you have, how effective your current treatment is and how consistently you can administer or receive treatment.

You can try going to a massage therapist, but trigger points are very fickle. They need to be addressed daily using a technique that applies the pinpoint pressure that is needed.

Even if you are lucky enough to find a clinician who can properly assess your condition – let alone treat trigger points – it can be time-consuming and costly to pay someone to completely release all your primary and latent myofascial trigger points.

Most likely it will be impractical to see a massage therapist frequently enough to get a trigger point to release.

**An approach that makes sense**

The basic idea is simple. First of all, a trigger point is only about the size of a mustard seed, which is one of the tiniest seeds. The idea is to put sustained pressure on the area for a set
A number of techniques help you do this. The bottom line is that you need to take the initiative.

“There is no substitute for learning to control your own musculoskeletal pain,” says Dr. Simons. “Treating myofascial trigger points yourself addresses the source of that kind of common pain and is not just a way of temporarily relieving it.”

Dr. Simons has it exactly right: You must educate yourself about your condition and then apply what you’ve learned. This runs counter to today’s conventional wisdom, which says that whenever you have a health issue, you should find someone to take care of the problem for you.

You need to take responsibility for managing your own care. From time to time, of course, you may find you need help from medical professionals. But even then, the more you know, the better care you will receive. This will require some time and effort on your part, but the payoff will be faster and better results.

Click here to learn more about trigger point self treatment

Pillar 2: Mind

Is it all in your head?

You’ve tried everything to get rid of your neck pain: physical therapy, chiropractors, cortisone shots, prescription pain pills - you name it, you’ve done it. So why does your neck still feel like it’s stuck in a vise that’s being turned tighter and tighter?

Notice that all of the tactics you’ve tried focus on the physical. But what if we told you that while these physical fixes are important steps to ditching neck pain, you’re missing what can be one of the biggest contributors to the pain... your mind?

Here’s where we tell you that your neck pain is at least partly in your head. Not that you’re imagining it (though some doctors have probably told you that when they couldn’t figure out the problem). However, your mind and emotions can be keeping you stuck in pain.

4 Neck pain relief tips

1: Relax your body and mind

Sometimes it’s not what you do to relieve neck pain, but what you don’t do. By that I mean you need to take frequent breaks from the busyness of everyday life to rest, relax and reduce the painful muscle tension that builds up during a stressful day.
Give your body a break by resting often, even if it's just to take a 10-minute walk during the workday. Other ways to give your mind and body a much-needed rest include:

- **Meditation**: Closing your eyes and simply focusing on your breathing can help you put your pain in perspective, as well as relax painful muscles. Need help getting into the zone? The Meditation Podcast offers free guided meditations that you can download to your MP3 player.

- **Sleep**: Be sure to log enough sleep during the night so you feel well rested. For most people, this is between 6 and 9 hours. Tiredness can make neck pain seem even worse than it is, and can exacerbate tight muscles in the neck. If you have problems sleeping, don't miss our 15 Essential Tips for Better Sleep.

- **Self-hypnosis**: To perform self-hypnosis you'll enter a deep state of relaxation then use self-suggestion techniques such as affirmations to reduce pain and achieve positive changes in your life. You can find instructions on how to perform self-hypnosis at Mind Tools. And if you don't want to go it alone, you can visit a hypnosis practitioner who will walk you through the process.

### 2: Set doable goals to reduce neck pain

Too many people make the mistake of dealing with their neck pain without a plan. It hurts, they put on an ice pack. It hurts again the next day and they call their doctor.

Like anything else in life, you need to set goals for getting out of pain and then develop a plan that will help you reach those goals.

An inspiring goal should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

**Specific**: It's hard to be motivated by a vague goal like “I want to feel better.” So be specific: Do you want to be able to play an hour’s worth of tennis without pain? Do you want your pain to go from a 9 on the pain scale to a 2?

**Measurable**: If you can measure a goal, you’ll know when you’ve achieved it. The goals we mentioned - being able to play tennis for an hour or reducing pain from a 9 to a 2 - work because you can measure them.

**Attainable**: A goal needs to be something you can reasonably achieve. Reducing neck pain from a 9 to a 2 overnight? Probably not doable. Doing it in three months? Much more realistic.

**Relevant**: Set goals that mean something to you personally. How does reducing neck pain tie into your life values and passions? For example, if being there for your grandkids is one of your life values, getting rid of neck pain so you can play with them is a relevant goal.

**Timely**: Putting time limits on your goals, instead of saying you'll achieve them “someday,” will give you something concrete to strive for.

---

The Healthy Back Institute® • A Pain in the Neck • 20
3: Educate yourself to find relief from neck pain

John E. Sarno, MD, a Professor of Clinical Rehabilitation Medicine at New York University School of Medicine and author of “The Divided Mind: The Epidemic of Mindbody Disorders”, coined the term Tension Myositis Syndrome (TMS) - a condition characterized by pain that seems to have no physical cause, especially in the upper neck, back and shoulders.

In plain English, that means your neck pain can be caused by your mental state.

TMS experts advise that pain-sufferers write out the issues that might be a source of repressed emotions that can lead to pain - and they also recommend education in the psychological and physical aspects of TMS.

4: Banish neck pain by changing your mindset

I know, it’s hard to keep a positive, relaxed outlook when your neck is killing you.

But if you let yourself become overwhelmed with negative feelings and stress, it can keep you from healing the pain.

Stress and negative emotions do two nasty things:

• They create tight muscles that lead to painful muscle imbalances.
• They make you feel hopeless and keep you from taking positive action to reduce your neck pain.

Consider this popular saying: “If you think you can’t, you’re right; but if you believe you can, you will!”

In other words, if you despair that your neck pain will never go away, you’re creating the very conditions that make that thought true. But if you achieve a positive outlook, your neck pain will go away - and you’ll naturally take steps to make it a reality!

Pillar 3: Diet

By Dr. Mark Wiley

Food is a critical part of the wellness puzzle. Food can cause pain, inflammation and compressive force on your joints.

The typical American diet supports ill health by consisting of an enormous amount of saturated and trans fats, sugar, processed meats, preservatives and a frightening amount of processed foods.

An anti-inflammatory diet full of dense nutrients can reduce pain, inflammation and body mass, to relieve your pain and symptoms. By switching to an anti-inflammatory diet consisting of healthy whole foods, you can actually decrease inflammation and ease joint pain and discomfort.
Eat Less of These

- Animal Milk Products (milk, cream, ice cream, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt)
- Hydrogenated Oils (non-dairy creamer, crackers, cookies, chips, snack bars)
- Nitrates (hot dogs, cold cuts, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, liverwurst)
- Processed Sugars (candy, soda, bread, bottled fruit juice, cookies, snack bars)
- Nightshades (potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, paprika)
- Convenience / Fast Foods (french fries, onion rings, loaded baked potatoes, fatty burgers, Mexican food, pizza, calzones, stromboli)
- Processed White Flour Products (flour, bread, pasta, pizza, crackers, pretzels, donuts)

Eat More Of These

- Anti-Inflammatory Foods
- Wild Alaskan Salmon
- Fresh Whole Fruits
- Bright Colored Vegetables (except nightshades)
- Green and White Tea
- Purified and Distilled Water
- Healthy Oils (olive, flax, hemp, safflower, hazelnut, coconut)
- Certified Organic Beef and Poultry
- Nuts, Legumes and Seeds
- Dark Green Leafy Vegetables
- Organic Oatmeal (regular, not instant)
- Aromatic Spices (turmeric, ginger, cloves, garlic, onion, coriander, ground mustard seed)

*Both lists from Arthritis Reversed by Dr. Mark Wiley*
Foods that Cause Pain and Inflammation

Food is a double-edged sword. It can both cause and reduce inflammation. Consuming the right mix of foods is essential to living a pain-free life.

In times of injury or flare-ups, the foods you eat may be what’s keeping the inflammation active, well past its usefulness, and send your pain into chronic territory.

7 categories of foods to avoid, to reduce pain and inflammation

1. Animal milk products: milk, cream, ice cream, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt
2. Hydrogenated oils: non-dairy creamers, crackers, cookies, chips, snack bars
3. Nitrates: hot dogs, cold cuts, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, liverwurst
4. Processed sugars: candy, soda, bread, bottled fruit juice, cookies, cake, pastries
5. Nightshades: potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, paprika
6. Convenience foods: French Fries, onion rings, loaded baked potatoes, fatty burgers, Mexican food, pizza, calzones, Stromboli
7. Processed white flour products: flour, bread, pasta, pizza, crackers, pretzels, donuts

Are you surprised?

As you can see, most of the items on this list are actually the staple American diet. Is it any wonder Americans are among the most obese and pain-suffering people in the world?

If you look closely at this list, you’ll notice that these ingredients are found in just about every snack food, frozen dinner, bread and even so-called “healthy” foods.

Whatever you do, don’t believe the marketing. Read the labels instead.

Eating these foods increases the longevity of inflammation, and your chronic pain. Eliminating these items from your diet will help stop the inflammation cycle.

Foods that Reduce Pain and Inflammation

We all know the food we eat is our primary source of nutrients and energy, and becomes the substance of our blood.

In addition to oxygen and water, food is the substance of life. Food can make you strong and keep you in homeostatic balance. A diet high in fiber and whole foods, low in preservatives and unhealthy fat and infused with blood-invigorating aromatic spices can help reduce pain and inflammation.
It is essential to consume as many fresh, organic, whole foods as possible. Eating foods in or as close to their original state is one of the keys to being healthy, preventing self-induced, diet-based inflammation and reducing pain.

Here is a list of the best foods known to prevent and reduce inflammation and pain. Eat them throughout the day as part of wholesome meals.

- Wild Alaskan salmon
- Fresh whole fruits
- Bright colored vegetables (*except nightshades)
- Green and white tea
- Purified and distilled water
- Healthy oils (olive, flax, hemp, safflower, hazelnut, coconut)
- Beef and poultry that is certified organic
- Nuts, legumes, seeds
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Organic oatmeal (regular, not instant)
- Aromatic spices (turmeric, ginger, cloves, garlic, onion, coriander, ground mustard seed)

As you can see, a whole foods diet high in nutrients and low in preservatives and unhealthy fats can actually work to reduce pain and inflammation. It also supports proper nerve function, and muscle and bone health.

**Acid/Alkaline, or pH level**

The acid/alkaline, or pH level of your body (which can cause or prevent inflammation) is related to the food you consume.
Use this chart to see what you eat on a daily or monthly basis that may be contributing to your joint pain.

To summarize, food is critical to your wellness. The standard American diet is filled with convenience and processed foods – a deadly recipe for acidity, inflammation and pain.

Avoiding inflammatory foods and consuming as much fresh, organic, whole foods as possible will reduce your pain and inflammation, and even your weight!

Stock up on essential, yet overlooked foods like green tea, mushrooms, turmeric and filtered water to reduce pain and inflammation.

Note: this section is excerpted from the book *Arthritis Reversed, by Dr. Mark Wiley.*

The Complete Healing Formula

Most neck pain treatments fail because they begin at the end. That is, they focus on the pain, which is just a symptom of a larger problem.

Whether your goal is to get lasting relief from your pain, or to stay healthy, you should know that neck pain, or any disease for that matter, develops as a process.

If you try to mask neck pain temporarily with drugs and other treatments, the underlying problem will still be there.

Muscle balance therapy and finding your trigger points are important, but they are not the total solution.

At the beginning of this book, we discussed the three pillars of health: body, mind and diet. Each has to be addressed to some degree if you want to achieve results.

The complete healing formula is about deficiencies and excesses. For example, you can have an excess of sugar, wheat or diary, and a deficiency in nutrients. Or you can have excess muscle tightness in the front of the hips, and be deficient in muscle strength in the glutes, or back of the hips.

As a result you may have stagnation, which leads to pain, illness or weight gain.

Ask yourself:

1. What in my life is in excess?
2. What am I deficient in?
3. What is the stagnation or the resistance as a result of the imbalances?
Conclusion: The 1% Solution on the Road to Success

In the end, everything matters. You have to take responsibility and learn how to address your physical problems, as well as the nutritional and mind-body triggers that are causing your pain.

Each person is individual, and you’ll need to find the unique combination of muscle balancing, diet and stress relief that works for you.

This begins with education.

Congratulations on reading this far. It shows you are motivated to change your life, and that’s the first step. This book is a great resource, but there’s only so much we can put into one e-book.

If you’re serious about banishing your neck and shoulder pain for good, you owe it to yourself to check out the complete program, the Lose the Neck Pain® System.

By now, you may be thinking, “Yikes! There's so much to do. I have to change my diet, identify my muscle imbalances, get a new pillow….where do I start?”

The 1% solution

Relax. Getting started is as easy as moving forward in 1% increments.

Pick one new thing to begin. For example, you might decide to start with the self-assessment in this e-book.

Once you see your posture compared to the image of a healthy one, you might choose 3 stretching exercises to do twice a day.

When you see that you’re feeling better, the next step might be to change one food from an unhealthy option to a better one.

After that, you might decide to buy a new pillow or back support for your office chair.

You get the picture. Just keep moving forward in baby steps, or 1% at a time. Once you feel the benefits, you’ll naturally want to do more.

Don't be discouraged by the road ahead. Think of it as an opportunity to respond to the signals your body is sending you. Continue to learn more, because what you read here is just a small part of the vast opportunities to heal yourself.

Remember, the road to success in anything, including healing, begins with one step.

Take that one step, or the 1%, and then the next step. Before you know it, you’ll be looking back in amazement at what you accomplished!

Isn’t it nice to know that finding information and learning more is actually a part of the healing process?

Searching for the answer is part of solution!
Before you resort to prescription or even over-the-counter medications, you should know what safer options for pain relief are available.

Rub On Relief® is a broad-spectrum homeopathic pain cream that was formulated to address many of the foundational reasons why you are in pain.

Formulated without methyl salicylate (a toxic component common in many over-the-counter back pain creams), it does not contain any questionable ingredients such as parabens, petrolatum, paraffin, mineral oil, toluene, artificial colors, preservatives or NSAID drugs.

Rub On Relief® is a synergistic blend of homeopathic ingredients, each carefully selected to address pain and inflammation from a slightly differently angle.

Heal-n-Soothe® is a natural anti-inflammatory formula that contains 12 of the most powerful and safe anti-pain ingredients.

Unlike traditional pain medications that simply cover up your pain like a Band-Aid, Heal-n-Soothe® actually HEALS the underlying condition causing your pain.

That means you'll feel quick pain relief in the short-term... and permanent healing in the long-term, without the side effects common to prescription NSAIDs!

Far-infrared heat therapy is helpful in reducing pain and increasing mobility. Heat increases blood circulation to the area of pain. The circulating blood brings more oxygen and nutrients, and at the same time it removes waste products, which helps heal the tissue.

Of the many heat therapy options, far-infrared heat stands above the rest.

Far-infrared heat transforms safe light energy into safe heat energy, at a frequency that penetrates your body up to three inches with an even distribution and prolonged thermal effect for pain relief.

Ordinary heating pads are slow to heat and penetrate just 2-3mm (about the thickness of your skin). They simply don't go deep enough to warm your muscles and tissues, leaving you with little more than warm skin.

Far-infrared heat, on the other hand, heats fast and penetrates so deep you'll feel the comfort and pain relief last up to six hours (depending on how long you soak in the heat), compared to the relief stopping the instant you turn off an ordinary heating pad.

Correcting your muscle imbalances

If you found yourself nodding when we described poor posture or forward head posture, and the back and neck pain associated with it...you're not alone.
Chances are you have already developed significant muscle imbalances between the front and back of your neck and shoulders.

If it hasn’t already manifested into serious pain, it may soon.

If you are in pain, your imbalances need to be addressed. Once your muscle imbalances are corrected, posture dysfunctions resolve themselves and the pain caused by these muscle stressors goes away.

*Lose the Neck Pain® System* takes you step-by-step through the process of identifying the exact muscle imbalances you have. It then gives you the targeted stretches and exercises you need to get fast pain relief.

Tens of thousands of people like you have already experienced its lasting results.

Please take a minute to learn more now about this amazing neck and shoulder-pain treatment.

LosetheBackPain.com free newsletter. Finally, to stay on top of the latest advances in back pain relief, and to receive more tips to becoming pain free, subscribe to our free newsletter.

You, too, can join the growing ranks of people who have beat neck, shoulder and back pain naturally, and are now living their lives to the fullest, free of pain.