

Neck-Stretching Exercises for Torticollis

Neck-stretching exercises have been recommended for your child because he or she has tightness in his or her neck muscles that is limiting neck movement. These exercises should be performed with each diaper change, or at least 5 times a day, until your child's neck has a normal range of motion.

Exercise 1. The first exercise is designed to improve rotation of your child's head to the right and left. Place one hand on your child's chest. Place the other hand on the side of your child's face. Gently but firmly turn the head so that the chin moves toward the shoulder. Turn the head only to the point of resistance, hold for 10 seconds, and release. Switch hands and repeat the same steps, turning the head to the shoulder in opposite direction.



Exercise 1. Child undergoing exercise with face looking toward shoulder.

Exercise 2. The second exercise is designed to improve bending of your child's head to the side. Place one hand on your child's upper chest and shoulder area so that his or her body does not move. Hold the top of your child's head with the other hand. Gently but firmly tilt the head to the side, pressing the ear toward the shoulder. Press only to the point of resistance, hold 10 seconds, and release. Switch hands and repeat the same steps, tilting the opposite ear to the shoulder.

During the exercises that move the tight area of your child's neck, your child will fuss and squirm. However, consistent use of these exercises gradually will improve your child's neck mobility.



Exercise 2. Child undergoing exercise with ear tilting toward shoulder.

This information is designed to provide information about exercises that have been prescribed by your child's health-care provider. If you have questions about these instructions or your child's care, contact your physician.
