

## Basic Spinal Hygiene Exercises

Please consult your chiropractor before beginning these exercises

**YES, NO,  
MAYBE!**

- Each of these exercises should be performed for both sides of the body
- For each exercise move to a **maximum range of motion** and hold for **10 seconds** repeat **3 times**
- Make sure you hold good posture and continue breathing with a relaxed face while stretching



### Neck Flexion and Extension ('Yes')

- Extend head back as far as possible and hold
- Discontinue and tell your chiropractor if dizziness occurs
- Flex head forward as far as possible and hold



### Neck Rotation ('No')

- Rotate head to one side as far as possible and hold



### Neck Lateral Flexion – Side bend ('Maybe')

- Pull left arm down and across your back whilst flexing head to the right
- Repeat on the other side



### **YES!** Spinal Forward Flexion and Spinal Backward Extension

- With knees straight, but not locked, slowly bend forward as much as possible and hold
- Come slowly back up to standing position
- Slowly extend backward as much as possible and hold
- Discontinue and tell your chiropractor if dizziness occurs



### **NO!** Spinal Rotation

- Firmly plant feet on ground shoulder width apart
- With straight arms clasp hands in front of you
- Rotate head, shoulders and hips as far as possible and hold



### **MAYBE!** Spinal Lateral Flexion

- With knees straight bend to the side and slide your hand as far down your leg as far as possible and hold
- Try not to bend either forwards or backwards – if it helps imagine yourself between two sheets of glass

**Wall Exercise** – Progress slowly in terms of number of repetitions and force applied, hold for 30 seconds



- Place heels, buttocks, upper back and head against the wall
- Bring arms up with right angles at shoulders and elbows, bring the forearm and back of hands against the wall
- Tuck chin in slightly, **RELAX AND INHALE**
- **EXHALE SLOWLY** while pressing back of head and forearms against the wall

## Y W T L

These four exercises should follow each other in succession and should be done at least once per day. Progress in terms of length of time held. Inhale while relaxing and exhale while contracting the muscles between your shoulder blades

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### Y's and W's

- With arms straight above the head and facing each other draw your shoulder blades together as you exhale
  - Bend your elbows to bring your arms into the W position, continue to draw your shoulder blades together, exhale as you contract your muscles
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### T's

- Straighten your elbows to bring your arms into the T position inhaling as you relax and exhaling as you draw your shoulder blades together
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### L's

- Bending your elbows again but this time bring them towards your waist
  - Maintain the connection between the shoulder blades
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## Pelvic rock and Squat

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### Pelvic Rock

- From a straight standing position arch your lower back as you inhale
  - As you exhale rotate your pelvis forward and squeeze your gluteal (buttock) muscles. Hold for 30 seconds
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### Squat

- Bending at the hips and knees slowly lower yourself towards the floor
  - Lots of people find this difficult but you can do it, it just takes practice!
  - If you can't make it all the way, stop and hold where you feel comfortable
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## Good choices to make

- Daily physical activity
- Daily spinal hygiene exercises
- Regular chiropractic checkups
- Sitting on a fitness ball with good posture at your work station
- Frequent breaks with exercises and stretches
- Maximise opportunity for physical daily living tasks
- Hobbies that require physical exertion, find an exercise friend or group
- Gymnastics, yoga, Pilates or equivalent
- Set mirrors in car so you can only see out of them with proper posture
- Own a wobble board and exercise ball

## Activities to Avoid or Minimise

- Sitting
- Standing with weight on one foot
- Reading on back with head flexed forward
- One sided sports – practice both sides
- Carrying bags on one shoulder
- Sleeping on stomach
- Cradling phone between shoulder and ear
- Watching TV
- Repetitive activities with arms in front or overhead
- Poor posture during any activity