



## Neck training programme: rehabilitation programme for neck and middle back problems

P a t i e n t   I n f o r m a t i o n

## INTRODUCTION

Neck problems can have a significant impact on your life. Your body is telling you you can no longer perform activities that were previously quite straightforward. The pain is always there or recurs time and again. As these episodes of pain increase in frequency and/or intensity you may, on the one hand, start to worry and become anxious when performing certain movements or activities. On the other hand, you may ignore the pain and all too often put your body under excessive strain.

You may well already have consulted a doctor about your neck pain and received treatment from a physiotherapist, osteopath or other therapist. These treatments often produce good, albeit temporary, results. You may consequently need more specific support and/or different types of treatment.

This rehabilitation programme aims to help you tackle your complaints yourself and restore your confidence in your own body. We will also help you understand and manage all aspects that have an influence on your complaints. The strength of this programme lies in the combination of group based sessions on general topics and individual therapy for your specific needs.

## NECK TRAINING REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

The neck training programme focuses on an interdisciplinary approach for people with persistent symptoms in the neck and/or middle back.

The programme covers various disciplines and offers therapy managed by a physiotherapist, psychologist and ergonomics practitioner, in consultation with a doctor specialised in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Using education, training sessions, physiotherapy, psychosocial support and/or ergonomic advice, we aim to achieve the following objectives in group or individual format:

- ✓ To provide information on the origins and prevention of neck problems. Optimising the balance between load and load bearing ability is key in this process.
- ✓ To help you strengthen the basic stability of your neck, acquire functional skills, build up a basic condition, gain confidence in and promote harmony within your own body, and learn how to relax.

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The neck training programme is aimed at people suffering from mechanical neck and/or middle back problems, who would benefit from a more in-depth approach. The physical medicine and rehabilitation physician will determine whether you qualify for this programme.

We would expect you to attend the two hourly neck training sessions for a period of eight consecutive weeks. Following the initial evaluations, in consultation with the team, your specific individual requirements are assessed and a decision is made as to which additional therapies you may still qualify for.

## STEPS TO BE TAKEN

### Step 1. Appointment with a doctor at the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit.

- ✓ You have not yet been referred to the neck training programme. Arrange an appointment via 016 34 25 60 with a doctor at UZ Leuven, who is specialised in spinal disorders. If necessary, this doctor can refer you to the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit. In such cases your problems will initially be assessed in more detail.
- ✓ You have already been referred to the neck training programme, upon a recommendation from your GP or a specialist consultant. Make an appointment with a doctor at the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit at UZ Leuven via 016 33 87 99. The doctor will verify whether you actually qualify for the neck training programme or whether a different type of treatment would be more appropriate.
- ✓ You already have a prescription for the neck training programme issued by a doctor of the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit at UZ Leuven. You can make an appointment to start the neck training programme via 016 33 87 99.

### Step 2. The neck training programme

#### General

- Eight participants in each neck training group.
- Eight two hourly neck training sessions, one session a week.
- If necessary supplemented by individual therapy.

#### Evaluation at the start of the neck training programme

Before the programme starts you will be examined by a physiotherapist, followed by a meeting with the psychologist. These evaluations focus on posture and movement examinations and exploratory/informative discussions. We will also ask you to complete a number of functional

and psychosocial questionnaires on neck complaints. These findings will be discussed during an interdisciplinary team meeting, following which your specific programme will be determined.

### Group based neck training sessions

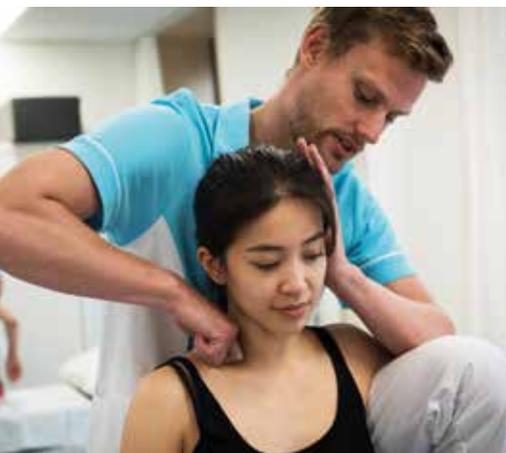
During the first hour the physiotherapist, doctor or psychologist will provide theoretical information.

- Session 1. Origins and treatment of neck and middle back problems
  - Neck training programme objectives
  - Ergonomics of lying down
- Session 2. What are neck and middle back problems? – Medical and therapeutic approach
- Session 3. Basic principles for the prevention and repair of problems
- Session 4. Ergonomics of sitting down
- Session 5. Impact of pain on your life
- Session 6. Lifting, carrying and moving items – Day to day activities inside and outside the home
- Session 7. Acceptance, dosing and communication
- Session 8. What is pain? – What to do in the event of acute pain?
  - Sports activities
  - Information on restoring condition

Following a brief pause, the focus will now be on exercises.

- Posture awareness
- Stabilisation exercises
- Mobilising exercises
- Functional exercises: lifting, cleaning, etc.
- Relaxation.





## Additional therapies

- ✓ Individual training sessions (condition, posture, stability, mobility, functional training etc.) in the fitness room and/or swimming pool.
- ✓ Individual physiotherapy (manual therapy, exercise therapy, taping etc.).
- ✓ Individual ergonomic advice (on work, bed system, ergonomic aids, etc.).
- ✓ Meetings with the psychologist (concerning return to work or reorientation, pain, fear, learning not to overdo it, sleeping problems, stress management, etc.).
- ✓ Workshop on screen based working, improved sleep and/or stress management (two hourly group sessions).
- ✓ Building up your condition again: following a re-evaluation, it will be possible to continue with the training for a maximum period of six months.

### Re-evaluation following the neck training programme

After eight weeks a physiotherapist and doctor will re-evaluate your progress. We will discuss your progress and, together with you, establish what the next potential steps might be. Your rehabilitation can then be extended (individual therapy and/or building up your condition again) or terminated. You are entitled to maximum 36 therapy sessions over a maximum period of six months. If the programme is extended, you will have a final evaluation once you have completed all the therapies.

### Step 3. Finalisation of the neck training programme dossier with the doctor at the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit.

A final assessment is made during a consultation with the doctor at the physical medicine and rehabilitation unit.

### COST

You will be charged a therapy fee for each day you attend the neck training programme, irrespective of how many programme therapists have been involved in your treatment. The health insurance fund will cover a large share of this cost.

### CONTACT DATA

Outpatient rehabilitation (E 200)

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