

BPTT
NO DOCTOR REFERRAL
NECESSARY TO SEEK
PHYSICAL THERAPY
 DETAILS INSIDE



STRESS

A SILENT CULPRIT BEHIND YOUR ACHING NECK

Does stress cause neck pain? The short answer is no! At Breckenridge Physical Therapy, we like to say "contributes to" instead of "cause." The casual way healthcare professionals throw around terms can lead to confusion and, worse still, ineffective treatment. Fortunately, our highly skilled therapists know how to dig deep and find the root cause of your neck pain, and this information helps you find relief!

Understanding Nicole's Neck Pain

One of the most common things we hear from our patients is that their pain started for "no apparent reason." Like Nicole, people will wake up with a crick in their neck or notice a stiffness turning when driving in the car. It is also common for people to notice tightness in their upper back and neck after a long day.



Let's discuss Nicole, a 40-something-year-old working mother of three. Nicole was used to being very active, balancing her work schedule with getting her kids to all the various activities and school functions that come with being a mom nowadays.

Her neck pain first started as a crick in the neck when she woke up one morning. As the day progressed from driving her kids around to sitting at her desk, she noticed turning her

head became more difficult and painful, making focusing on work nearly impossible.

Nicole struggled to figure out why her neck started hurting and came to the conclusion that stress "must be" the culprit. The more pain and difficulty moving she had, the more convinced she was that stress was to blame.

So, what is actually the source of the pain? In most cases, there is an issue with the neck joints or the neck muscles due to prolonged positions. Our neck joints don't like remaining in any position for extended periods. In Nicole's case, she first noticed her pain in the morning, which may have been related to her neck position while sleeping. It is also important to note that in Nicole's case, the first sign of any issue was in the morning when she woke up, unrelated to stress.

As Nicole's day progressed, her pain got worse. But this also was more likely related to how she held her neck while driving or sitting at her computer. In both cases, her posture, specifically how she held her neck, seems to have contributed to her pain. Prolonged sitting can lead to a forward head position, resulting in tension to soft tissue (i.e., muscles, tendons, and ligaments) or negative changes to our blood flow.

The muscles of our neck function best when we move them. So, holding her head in one position likely led to irritation of the muscles and affected her ability to move her neck, which in turn caused stress.

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Stress "contributes" to neck pain because, when we experience stress, our bodies naturally respond by tensing up as a protective measure. This tension can lead to discomfort, particularly in the neck and upper back region. Research studies have found that individuals with higher stress levels reported increased neck pain as compared to those with lower stress levels. This is why we say "contributes" to, but not the cause of, neck pain.

How Physical Therapy Can Help Alleviate Neck Pain

We will target the source of your pain by performing a thorough examination, starting with your medical history and details about how, when, and where your symptoms began. As we saw with Nicole, determining how, when, and why the pain started helps us eliminate possibilities and get to the actual root cause(s).

Our therapists will also analyze your posture and movement to identify any limitations or restrictions contributing to your condition. We'll use this information to design a program that addresses your specific needs.

We'll listen to your unique situation and specific issues and then work to help you find relief and get back to your normal routine.

Our treatment plans focus on relieving your pain and improving your posture, mobility, strength, etc., and educating you about managing your symptoms. Your program will likely include manual therapy (i.e., soft tissue work and/or joint mobilizations), targeted stretches, exercises, activity modification, or posture recommendations.

Book Your Appointment Today!

If you're dealing with neck pain or looking for someone to help you figure out what is causing your issues, call us today and set up a consultation!



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No Doctor Referral Necessary To Seek Physical Therapy

Whether you want to come in for a check-up, suffered a recent injury or if you want to improve your health, a doctor's referral is not needed. In the state of Colorado, you have direct access to physical therapy!

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Do you know anyone that needs our help?

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- ✓ Bend and move freely
- ✓ Balance confidently & securely
- ✓ Sit for long periods comfortably
- ✓ Walk for long distances
- ✓ Live an active & healthy life

Call us at 970.364.6601 or visit breckenridgephysicaltherapy.com

Exercise Essentials

LEVATOR STRETCH

Start by sitting up straight in a chair. Grab the underside of the chair with one hand and straighten that arm. Diagonally tilt your head and aim your chin at your hip on the side facing away from where you are holding the chair. Grab the top of your head with your free hand and gently pull your chin further toward your hip. Hold for 30 seconds.



Always consult your physical therapist or physician before starting exercises you are unsure of doing.



Call Breckenridge Physical Therapy at **970.364.6601**, or visit our website at breckenridgephysicaltherapy.com to schedule your appointment today!

SEPARATING MUSCLE AND JOINT PAIN

THE KEY TO LASTING RESULTS

Do you notice tightness in your upper back and neck? Is it more tight on one side than that on the other? The location and characteristics of your neck pain are valuable clues for our skilled therapists at Breckenridge Physical Therapy to identify the likely culprit for your pain, which helps us guide you to lasting relief.

Ready to unlock the secret to lasting relief from neck and upper back pain? Don't ignore those subtle signs – reach out to our skilled therapists today, and let us help you resolve your pain once and for all!

Neck Pain – Muscle vs. Joint

It can be difficult for people to determine where their pain originates. One of the most common reasons people describe their pain is "no apparent reason." It often seems to come out of the blue or while doing the same everyday things you usually do.

You can use these clues to point you in the right direction:

- **Pain on one side = joint pain.** Although this, and all other clues, is not 100% true, it is a good starting point. Muscle tension tends to be equally distributed, whereas joint pain is typically one-sided.
- **Difficulty or inability to turn = joint dysfunction.** Muscle tension tends to make movement uncomfortable or to feel tight on the opposite side of where you're turning towards (pain on the left when turning right). Joint dysfunction usually causes the inability to turn or the sensation of a blockage when turning to the same side as the pain (pain on the right when turning right).
- **Pain that travels = joint.** Muscles tend to feel tight and sore in the muscles themselves, compared to joint pain, which travels from the source of pain up into the head or down into the shoulder and arm.

These clues can help us determine what is causing your pain, but the best way to get lasting relief is to schedule an appointment with one of our therapists!

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WANT TO STAY ACTIVE THIS SPRING?
WANT TO BE IN PEAK CONDITION FOR
SPRING SPORTS?

COME BACK TO PT!

Contact Breckenridge Physical Therapy today
and start living pain-free again!

970.364.6601

Patient Success Stories

"Justin has been great to work with in my rehabilitation, using different techniques and manipulation to regain my range of motion and strength"

"I had a shoulder repair. Justin has been great to work with in my rehabilitation, using different techniques and manipulation to regain my range of motion and strength. I especially appreciate the way he listens and uses my feedback to find the root of the problem (neck misalignment) and addresses that to facilitate the progress in my shoulder area. He is quite knowledgeable and I have always felt that my repair is protected during whatever procedure he does. Five stars!" –Susan W.

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5-MINUTE EGG AND HUMMUS FLATBREAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp hummus
- 1 whole grain wrap
- 1/4 cup baby arugula
- 1/2 English cucumber, cut into matchsticks
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/8 cup Greek feta, crumbled
- 1 soft-boiled egg, peeled, halved
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves

DIRECTIONS Spread the hummus over the wrap. Top with the arugula, cucumber, tomato, feta, egg and parsley. Season and serve.

<https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/5-minute-egg-hummus-flatbread-recipe/gblv1m06>