

# 4 Strategies To Heal Your Achy Neck *today*

**Dawn Thomas DScPT, OMPT**

Doctor of Physical Therapy. Spine Fanatic.  
Movement Artist. Posture Expert.



*Hi, I am Dr. Dawn.*

I help active women in midlife eliminate neck pain without lengthy appointments, medications or expensive treatments so you can enjoy the activities you love without neck pain returning.

I am a 27 year spinal care fanatic, posture expert and doctor of physical therapy. I have been helping clients eliminate spinal pain for three decades and have discovered how impactful what I have to teach you can be in healing your spine and allowing you to work and play on your own terms.

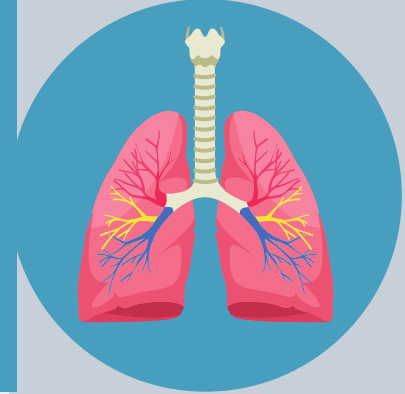
I know first hand how debilitating neck pain can be and how much it can interfere with daily life.

After providing 67,000 treatment sessions, I have developed a deep respect and awareness for how making small changes to your daily life can allow the body to heal. Those small changes start here.

I have developed a style of teaching that combines my experiences of providing fellowship supervision to 200 advanced manual therapy doctors of physical therapy, and developing 80 community based wellness education programs. Science meets practicality.

*Feel better today.*

These five strategies are a good starting point to begin in the right direction of treating your spine with care without adding more to your to do list. Healing is not always about doing more, it's about structuring your day, your environment and habits to give your body a chance to heal.



# BREATHE

The vast majority of people with neck pain have a ***limited ability to breathe correctly.*** People in pain tend to start using their neck and shoulder muscles to help with breathing and end up creating more pain and stiffness.

The best way to break this cycle is to learn how to ***Belly Breathe.*** This is what is called diaphragmatic breathing. Learning belly breathing can immediately reduce spasm and tightness in muscles, increase calm, reduce anxiety and increase oxygen in the body.

Practice like this: Sitting in relaxed posture with back rest. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Slowly breathe in ***through your nose trying*** to make the hand on your belly rise, while the hand on your chest remains still. Exhale gently. Repeat for 3-5 minutes twice a day to help reduce tension in your neck and body.

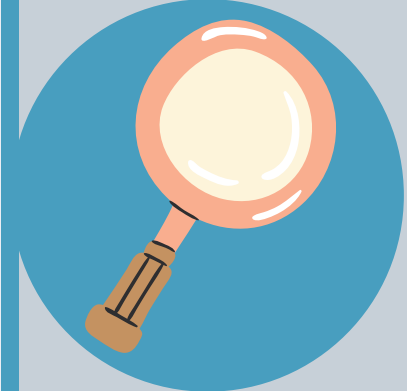


# MOVE EVERY 30 MINUTES

Your body was NOT designed to sit all day. Slouching increases the forces transmitted through your neck exponentially. When we sit for long periods, the muscles that support our spine start shutting down, making it harder to support our bodies. Then, these muscles can feel stiff and sore.

Movement creates circulation in both muscles and joints. Sitting still with little movement causes the fluid in our bodies to remain static. The less fluid movement the less circulation and we begin to feel stiff.

The solution is EASY. Set a timer for every 30 minutes to change positions or stand up and walk. This will keep the blood and fluid moving in the muscles and joints throughout the body and ward off stiffness and soreness before it starts



# GET YOUR VISION CHECK

Repositioning your head and neck for optimal sight is a very common way to develop pressure in the middle of the neck, especially when tipping the chin while using bifocals or trifocals. The most common compensation for vision is tipping the chin up and reaching the head forward which creates stiffness in several neck muscles, too much extension in the neck and compression in the joints.

Consider what you spend MOST of your time looking at and use lenses specific for that task. For example, if you spend most of your hours looking at computer screen, consider a specific pair of glasses just for the screen to reduce the amount of eye and neck adjustments you need to make.

Consider your selection of eyewear an *investment* in your long-term health. After all, you spend all your waking hours using your eyesight so why not make sure that you have the best eyewear to keep your spine safe and healthy.



# CHECK YOUR SLEEP POSITION

We spend 8 hours a night sleeping and if that positioning is one that compresses the irritated joints, correcting it can give us a head start to healing.

The best position to start with for optimal spine health is on your side or on your back. Spending 8 sleeping hours with your neck in optimal position will improve your neck health.

Poor positioning can compress your irritated joints and the thickness of your pillow, too flat or too thick, may cause problems.

When laying on your side, if it is too flat your head drops toward the bed causing compression on the side of the neck toward the bed and if the pillow is too thick your neck bends toward the side facing the ceiling, which compresses down on the sensitive joints on that side of the neck.