

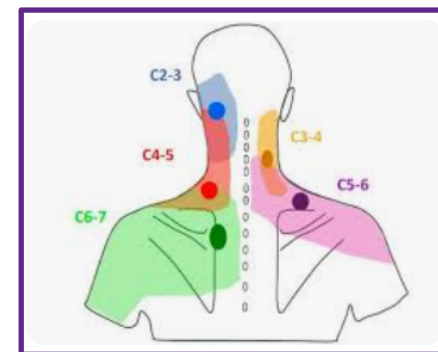
Part 1: Sleep in a soft cervical collar

- Sleep flat or with the thinnest pillow that is tolerated.
- Wear the collar backwards with the Velcro in front.
- Size it properly. These collars come in small, medium, and large. The size of the collar is measured from the **chin to the chest, not** the circumference around your neck. **You must try it on.**
- The collar cannot be purchased online—go to the store, open the box, and try it on. It should be snug but not uncomfortable.

If the collar is sized properly, it will do three things for you. First, it will keep your neck from moving while you are sleeping. (You have no control of your neck motion while you are asleep). Also, it will keep your neck muscles warm reducing spasm; and, if you size it properly, it will provide gentle cervical traction pulling your head apart from your body. This will allow more room for the nerves to exit the bony canal and reduce spinal nerve irritation.



Managing Neck, Shoulder Girdle, Scapular, and Radiating Arm Pain



These are simple self-management techniques to manage pain from the cervical spine.



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Part 2: Over-the-Door Traction

Neck traction, also called cervical traction, is a type of stretching using a harness or cushioned sling strapped to your head and a rope and pulley system that is hung over your door.

This device makes room for the spinal cord and nerves of the cervical spine. It takes pressure off these structures reducing spasm, muscle knots in the shoulder girdle, and pain that radiates to the shoulder blade or down the arm.

Notice from the picture, the metal pulley unit is placed over a door to a room in your home. You should have a straight back chair to sit in with your back against the door.

An over-the-door traction device can be used as often as required up to 3 or 4 times per day for 15 minutes per session. Cervical traction can be used daily or just for exacerbations: Times of increased pain.

Make sure that the head harness is worn properly. The goal is to equally distribute the weight between the chin and the occiput (back of the head).

The head weighs between 12 and 15 pounds. I suggest starting with 15 pounds of water weight in the bag. The bag is marked incrementally in pounds so you will know how much counter-traction weight you are adding.

You can change the weight of the counter-traction depending upon the response and your comfort. This treatment should not be painful. I suggest adding an ounce of bleach to the water in the bag to prevent microbial overgrowth.

If you have someone to help you, have them gently attach the water bag to the hook on the over-the-door pulley system after the harness is in place on your head and you are seated.

If you don't have help, after donning the harness, attach it at the 2 points on the metal cross bar after you are seated.

Now that you are in the harness, and you are comfortable that it is both secure and holding your head in a neutral position (Looking ahead neither looking up or down nor side-to-side) set a timer for 15 minutes.

Use small movements of just 15 to 20 degrees to gently look up, down, side-to-side.

The results are not immediate, and it might take several treatments to feel better. Usually, patients feel better within several hours to several days.

Over-the-door Traction

