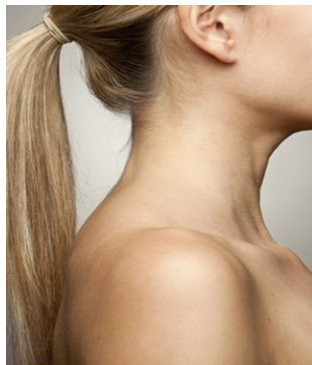
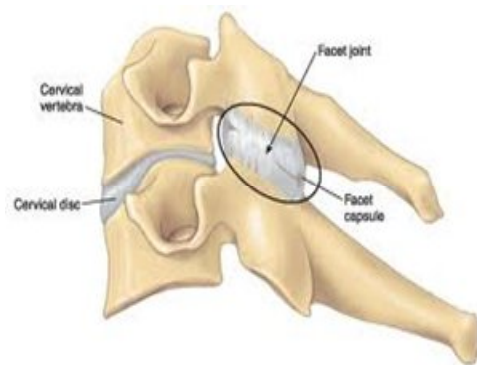


Zone 2

Lateral neck and upper back pain

This pain usually comes from damage to a joint at the back of the neck, the facet joint. These are small paired joints, one pair between neighbouring vertebrae. They give stability to the spine, preventing too much movement and taking some of the weight of the head. The joint has a capsule of tough fibrous tissue, which stops the two bones moving too far apart or sliding too much. The bones are lined with cartilage and



lubricated by a thin layer of fluid, which is produced by the membrane, which lines the joint. The capsule of the joint can be torn, by twisting injuries, or extremes of movement. "Whiplash" injuries, usually caused by a rear end shunt in a vehicle, causing backwards and then forwards movement, often violent, can cause this type of tear. The result is that the joint is weakened and therefore may move too much, leading

to more damage. Also, the membrane lining it often becomes inflamed. This hurts and makes the muscles around the joint contract strongly, causing a "knot". A burning pain on the side of the neck results, with often gross restriction of movement. Treatment starts with gentle massage and anti-inflammatory medication, combined in an APPLICATOR to mobilise the muscles and suppress the reaction. A TENS MACHINE can help to mask the pain. If bad, PARACETAMOL or NUROFEN taken for a few days are beneficial (always read the package insert). As the pain settles, getting the movement in the neck right again is important. Simple exercises can help, as can adjusting your posture, especially when sitting. For more information on these and for ways to improve your ergonomics at work, visit www.backzone.com or come back in to look at other devices that may help strengthen, support and realign your muscles.

Exercises as keeping the joints moving, prevents them from stiffening up more, leading to more pain. It is, however, important to do them gently. Rolling the head, looking down, then round to the side, then up at the ceiling, holding the position at every 90 degrees for 2-3 seconds to feel the muscles stretch will help. Always remember to repeat this in the other direction. Perform this several times, if you are comfortable doing so. As you get better at it, the angles to which you turn will increase and you can hold the four positions longer as you go round.

Osteopathic treatment and physiotherapy can be very effective, by developing your movement pattern and returning it to normal. This takes the strain out of the joints and the muscle tension then settles down.

Visit www.londonspineclinic.com for information on these and advice on other treatment