

## **Reduce Head Trauma By Strengthening Your Neck**

Do you want to stay concussion-free during the football season? Or any sport season for that matter. To potentially reduce your risk of a head injury, a strong neck is critical. Stronger neck muscles may reduce the concussive force from a blow by dissipating the force. When you collide with an opponent, if your neck is weak, the full energy of the blow transfers to your brain. But if your neck is strong, it will stay rigid and protect your head to a greater extent from the force of the collision. Training your neck should include standard extension flexion and lateral flexion exercises. However, to fully protect your brain, you also need to perform rotational exercises—which are often overlooked. The following neck-training workout won't completely eliminate the risk, but it will help reduce your chance of sustaining a season-ending head injury.

### **Neck Workout**

*Instructions: Start at 12 repetitions of each exercise, holding each rep for two seconds. Increase the reps by two every two weeks up to 25 reps. Perform the exercises lying on your side and stomach also and rotate through body positions on different days, i.e., Mon. lie on your back, Tue. lie on your side, Wed. lie on your stomach, and then repeat the rotation for the rest of the week.*

### **Neck Rotations**

Lie with your back on a bench and your head hanging off the end in a neutral position. Slowly rotate your head from shoulder to shoulder.

### **Neck Flexion**

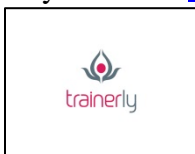
Assume the same position as above. Tilt your head so your chin touches your chest. Slowly tilt your head back to the starting position.

### **Neck Lateral Flexion**

Assume the same position as above. Tilt your head from side to side. Keep your shoulders down and your eyes fixed on the ceiling.

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