

PILATES FOR WHIPLASH

The term whiplash refers to an injury to your neck which is caused by the head being thrown forward (flexion), then backward (extension).

Other terms for whiplash can be neck sprain or strain, and it is an injury to the soft tissues (muscles, ligaments and tendons) of the neck. It most often occurs as a result of

- rear-end car collision,
- but can also happen during a fall, or
- from an injury while playing sports.

Severe whiplash can also involve injury to the joints, discs, neck muscles and nerves. Symptoms may start right after the injury or may take several days to become noticeable.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Neck stiffness and pain
- Reduced mobility in the neck
- Headache and dizziness
- Jaw pain
- Dizziness
- Difficulty swallowing and chewing
- Numbness and tingling down the arms
- Shoulder pain
- Upper and/or lower back pain
- In more severe cases, loss of memory and concentration, depression, fatigue

The biggest risk associated with whiplash is not receiving proper treatment promptly enough. This can lead to improper healing where the injured tissues tighten up, and gradually get weaker. The longer this goes on, the harder it is to get better.

TREATMENT

When whiplash is treated properly most symptoms resolve completely. The sooner you start treatment, the better, because with prompt, effective treatment symptoms disappear faster and you will have a better result in the end. You should start restorative exercise/conditioning right away to try to get back to your normal activities, but you have to respect the fact that your tissues are injured and pace yourself sensibly.

- Initially treatments to feel better will be done. This might include gentle mobilization techniques, stretching, different pain modalities such as acupuncture, ultrasound, laser, electrical stimulation and heat or ice.
- As symptoms improve exercises will be added to help gain range of motion, stability and strength.
- The exercise program will be progressed to the point that exercises are done in the clinic as well as in a gym, Pilates studio or at your home. These exercises will be designed to improve specific areas of weakness, as well as overall fitness.
- It is essential to start a treatment plan as soon as possible. This plan should involve symptom relief, and emphasize returning to normal activities through well designed exercises and strategies to deal with your symptoms as you heal.

HOW PILATES CAN HELP

Pilates can be used to create and exercise program to help with weakness created from the whiplash as well as rehabilitate, strengthen leading the prevention and help aid in over all fitness. In particular, Pilates can help with increasing mobility in the neck and shoulder areas. Muscle strength can be increased in the upper and lower back area. Postural problems that may have been developed due to the whiplash can also be corrected with Pilates. Increased energy is usually a common benefit of Pilates minimizing fatigue. Pilates is known to be a form of exercise requiring a mind and body connection. As a result concentration does develop over time. These are just some of the ways Pilates can help with whiplash. The personal and individual benefits of Pilates are many.



To find out more about how Pilates and Pilates Patio can help you recover from whiplash, please contact us at 613-422-3638 or lanipilatespatio.com

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