

**Get Fit With Darcy**  
ANY BODY ANY GOAL

**NERDY STUFF**-may contain weird words

# A PAIN IN THE NECK

When it comes to postural impairments, the forward position is quite a common one. Clearly, you can see even the Beibs isn't immune to this postural distortion. As with many postural imbalances, the cause can usually be traced back to a \*muscular imbalance (see Nerdy Stuff sidebar) The muscles most likely to be tight in this scenario would be the upper trapezius, sternocleidomastoid and the levator scapulae---all pictured above. In the shortened, overactive state, these muscles would work to pull your head forward while on the opposite side, the deep cervical flexors would be underactive and would be unable to do their job properly i.e. to pull your head back into its correct position.



What causes these three muscles to become tight can be varied from sitting at a computer all day, carrying a heavy bag or purse over your shoulder, these muscles compensating for weak lower trapezius or rhomboid muscles or even emotional stress. When we become stressed we tend to become chest breathers and instead of letting our diaphragms do their part, we compensate by using our upper traps and neck muscles do the work. In a relaxed state, you should notice your stomach moving up and down when breathing. As stress hits us, you will notice your chest and shoulders rising which isn't what we want. Other contributing factors for tight neck/traps include sleeping on two pillows, watching a movie from the front row as well as watching that TV at the gym while you are on the treadmill.

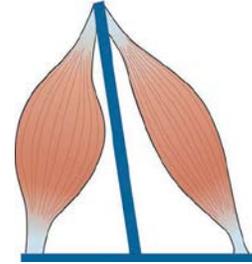
Symptoms can eventually arise as a result of the forward head posture. Headaches, neck pain, shoulder impingement and earaches as well as decreased flexibility in the neck/shoulder. Because the head is forward, your centre of gravity has now shifted and that can pull your shoulders and hips out of proper alignment potentially causing low back pain.

A good stretch routine is outlined at the side. You **don't** want to pull as hard as you can on your neck, simply strive for a light stretch for about 30 seconds per stretch.

Deep cervical strengthening can be done anywhere, anytime. While driving, simply tuck in your chin and press your head back against the seat for 3-5 seconds and release. Or, do this against the wall at home with a pillow behind your head for comfort. Repeat several times.

The "ball combo" exercise—designed to strengthen the rhomboids and lower trapezius muscles—can be done without the ball. If doing without the ball just stand with feet about shoulder width apart and bend forward (hinge at the hips) 45 degrees and do the routine shown. Strive for 10-12 reps at a slow pace.

This routine can safely be done every day so why not throw it in as part of your warmup or even all on its own. The more consistent you are with it the better results you will achieve.



\*A muscle imbalance is when a muscle on one side of a joint is overactive. When this happens it causes the muscle on the opposite side of the joint to be in a lengthened state. The overactive muscle

"inhibits" central nervous system signals to the lengthened muscle causing it to be underactive. As you can probably tell, you would want to stretch the overactive muscle and strengthen the underactive muscle to achieve balance again.

## STRETCH



## STRENGTHEN

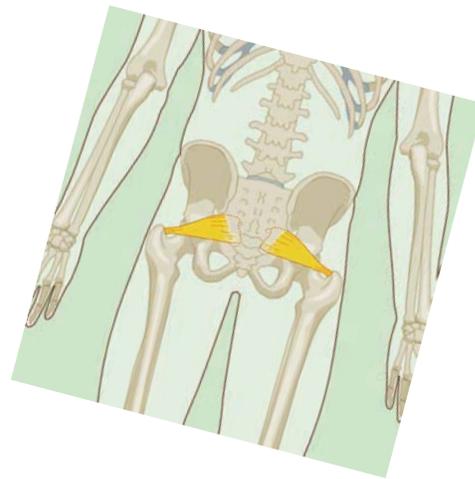


# Muscle 101-The Piriformis

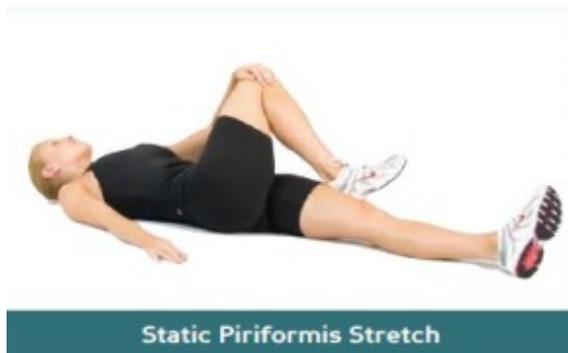
This muscle goes from the sacrum and attaches to femur. It helps to stabilize the hips but it also has 3 important actions. It will:

- ➔ Externally rotate the hip
- ➔ Abduct the hip (moving your leg straight out to the side)
- ➔ Extend the hip (moving your leg back)

It's an important muscle because it can tend to get tight as it compensates for a weak back side and can contribute to low back pain



*An Amazing Piriformis Stretch-This feels so good!*



## How To Do It

- \*Flex your hip 90 degrees
- \*Grab your knee and bring it across your body with your foot resting on the outside of the opposite leg.
- \*Keep your shoulders on the floor
- \*Do it with or without the ball---both are great

# Nutrition Corner

## FATS

Don't be afraid of fats because your body needs it. We use fat to protect our organs, insulate our bodies to keep us warm and the body can also use it as a source of energy for long duration events, like running. Just like carbs, there are good choices and bad choices. The really good choices (the "Green" fats) are called monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. The "yellow" fats are called saturated fats. You find it in meat and chicken so eating some of these fats is ok in moderation but if possible, make lower fat choices from this group like low-fat cheese and 1% milk. The "red" fats are called trans-fats and these are the ones you want to stay away from. They will cause health problems and probably make you feel sluggish if you ate them before an activity. While polyunsaturated fats are better for you, they are not all created equal. Omega-6 fats found in vegetable oils should be used in moderation and you should increase the amount of Omega-3 fats such as found in walnuts, flax and cold water fish like salmon and tuna. These are just a few of the better choices of Omega-3 but there are lots more. Sticking to these foods and you won't need to supplement with pills. These have all the Omega-3 fats you need!



Really Good	Make Lower Fat Choices When Possible, use sparingly or avoid	Not So Good-Stay Away!
Salmon	Lean meat, skinless chicken	Stick margarine, shortening
Avacados	Butter	Fried foods
Peanuts, Almonds	Cheese	Fast food
Nuts and seeds	Cream	Most baked goods, pastries
Olive Oil	Coconut, palm oil	
Peanut Oil		
Canola Oil		


Healthy For Good™

# THE FACTS ON FAT

The American Heart Association recommends replacing bad (saturated) fats with good (unsaturated) fats as part of a healthy eating pattern.

### LOVE IT

UNSATURATED (POLY & MONO)



- ✓ Lowers rates of cardiovascular and all-cause mortality
- ✓ Lowers bad cholesterol & triglyceride levels
- ✓ Provides essential fats your body needs but can't produce itself

### LIMIT IT

SATURATED



- ✗ Increases risk of cardiovascular disease
- ✗ Raises bad cholesterol levels

### LOSE IT

ARTIFICIAL TRANS FAT, HYDROGENATED OILS & TROPICAL OILS



- ✗ Increases risk of heart disease
- ✗ Raises bad cholesterol levels

EAT SMART   ADD COLOR   MOVE MORE   BE WELL

LEARN MORE AT [HEART.ORG/EATSMART](http://HEART.ORG/EATSMART)