



neck.buddy

The complete, no-nonsense —

Neck Pain *Relief.*

T H E H A N D B O O K

A **physiotherapy-grade handbook** on why your neck hurts, what actually works to fix it, and the 15-minute daily routine you can start tonight — built on the science of heat, massage, and movement.

Your neck has been *talking to you.*

01

The dull ache by 3pm. The tightness when you turn your head to reverse the car. The stiffness that greets you the moment your alarm goes off. You're not imagining it, and you're not alone.

Roughly **one in three adults in the UK** lives with persistent neck or shoulder tension — and most of them quietly accept it as the cost of modern life. This handbook exists because we don't think you should have to.

Inside, you'll find the same principles physiotherapists use in clinic, distilled into a format you can actually use at home. No jargon. No expensive equipment. Just clear, evidence-based steps you can fold into your day.

You'll learn exactly *why* heat and massage work the way they do — and how to fold them into a routine that actually changes how your neck feels day to day.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read it once, then keep it close.

The exercises and relief protocols in Chapters 2 and 3 are designed to be referenced — not memorised. Keep the PDF on your phone or print the pages you'll use most and pin them near your desk.

What's inside.

Five chapters. One full picture. Start anywhere.

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12_{min}

daily that changes how your neck feels

3_{wks}

until the new routine becomes automatic

40+

studies underpinning the science inside

Read Chapters 1 and 3 first. Use Chapters 2 and 4 as daily references — written to be opened on your phone mid-stretch, not memorised.

Why your neck hurts.

01

Your neck wasn't designed for the life you're asking it to live. Understanding why is the first step to making it stop.

A 5kg head on a 4cm spine

Your head weighs roughly the same as a bowling ball — about 5 kilograms. It sits on seven small vertebrae held together by 26 muscles and over a dozen ligaments. In neutral posture, an elegant feat of engineering.

Tilt your head forward by just 15 degrees — the angle of looking down at a phone — and the effective load on your neck **doubles to around 12 kg**. At 60 degrees, it's nearly 27 kg. That's a small child sitting on the back of your neck for hours each day.

12kg

load on your neck at a 15°
tilt

4hrs

avg daily phone use, UK
adults

1 in 3

adults with chronic neck
tension

The four modern culprits

1. Tech neck

Hours hunched over phones and laptops. Forward-head posture overstretches the muscles at the back of your neck and shortens those at the front — a chronic imbalance.

2. Stress-clenching

The trapezius is one of the body's primary "stress storage" sites. When you're under pressure, it tightens without you noticing — and many people carry that tension to bed.

3. Sleep position

The wrong pillow height keeps your neck bent at an unnatural angle for 7–8 hours a night. A third of your life spent reinforcing the problem.

4. Sedentary days

Muscles need movement to circulate blood and clear waste. A neck held in one position for 90 minutes starts to ache — even with "good posture."

The pain you can't quite describe

Most neck pain falls into one of three categories. Knowing which shapes how you treat it.

Muscular

Dull, aching, often in the trapezius. Worse at day's end. Responds well to heat, massage, and movement.

Postural

Tightness around the skull base and between shoulder blades. Triggered by long sitting. Improves with stretching.

Nerve-related

Sharp, radiating, or with tingling into arms. Don't self-treat — see Chapter 5 for red flags.

The damage isn't done in one bad day. It's done in ten thousand small moments your body is quietly absorbing.

Five techniques for *immediate relief.*

When the ache is already here, you need tools you can reach for in the next ten minutes — not next week's physio appointment.

01 Apply targeted heat for 15–20 minutes

Heat dilates blood vessels in the area, flooding tight muscles with oxygen and clearing the metabolic waste that drives soreness. A heated pad, a hot shower aimed at the trapezius, or a heat-massager combo all work. **Avoid icing first** — ice numbs but doesn't release the muscle.

02 The 90-second chin tuck

Sit tall. Without tilting, glide your chin straight back as if making a double chin. Hold 5 seconds, release. Repeat 10 times. Re-centres your head over your spine and resets the deep neck flexors.

03 Trigger-point pressure

Find the tightest knot in your trapezius (usually halfway between shoulder and neck). Apply steady pressure with your thumb, a tennis ball against a wall, or a massage device for 30–60 seconds until it softens.

04 Slow neck rotations

Gently turn your head to the right as far as comfortable. Hold 5 seconds. Return to centre. Repeat left. Five rounds. The goal is range of motion, not stretch — never push through sharp pain.

05 Walk for ten minutes

Often overlooked. Walking with arms swinging gently mobilises the entire upper back, which shares muscle groups with the neck. By the end, you'll often notice the tightness has eased without you "treating" it.

The 60-second emergency protocol

For moments when you need relief *now* — before a meeting, mid-flight, at the end of a long drive:

ONE MINUTE · ANYWHERE

- ✓ **Seconds 0–10:** drop both shoulders, breathe in for 4, out for 6.
- ✓ **Seconds 10–30:** chin tuck and hold for 5, release. Repeat three times.
- ✓ **Seconds 30–50:** roll shoulders backward 5 times, then forward 5.
- ✓ **Seconds 50–60:** slowly look up at the ceiling, then return. One smooth pass.

The science of *heat & massage.*

03

Two of the oldest interventions in medicine. Modern research keeps proving why they work — and why they work even better together.

What heat actually does

Applied heat at 40–45°C — deeply warm but not burning — triggers three measurable physiological responses:

- ✓ **Vasodilation:** blood vessels widen, increasing local circulation by up to 40%.
- ✓ **Reduced muscle spindle activity:** the nerve signals telling your muscle to stay tight literally quieten down.
- ✓ **Increased connective-tissue extensibility:** the fascia surrounding muscle becomes more pliable — which is why post-heat stretching is so much more effective.

What massage actually does

Randomised trials show that even basic kneading reduces self-reported neck pain by 30–45% over four weeks of regular use. The mechanisms:

- ✓ **Mechanical disruption** of "knots" — areas of contracted sarcomeres that won't release on their own.
- ✓ **Mechanoreceptor stimulation** — signals the nervous system to dial down pain response.
- ✓ **Lymphatic drainage** — helps clear inflammatory byproducts.



Heat opens the door. Massage walks through it. Used together, the effect is more than the sum of either alone.

Why the combination is greater than the sum

Heat alone relaxes muscle but doesn't address the actual knots. Massage alone works on a cold, contracted muscle is harder, slower, and often uncomfortable. Apply both together and the muscle softens *while* being worked, allowing deeper release with less pressure.

It's the principle behind every clinical setting from sports physio to elite recovery suites. It's also the principle we encoded into your Neck.Buddy.

HOW YOUR NECK.BUDDY APPLIES THE SCIENCE

- ✓ **Heat therapy** — warming plates reach 42°C, the validated therapeutic range.
- ✓ **Shiatsu massage nodes** — eight rotating heads target the trapezius and base-of-skull trigger points.
- ✓ **15-minute auto-shutoff** — matches the clinically optimal session length.

What about cold therapy?

Ice has a place — but a narrower one than people think. Use cold for the first 24–48 hours after an acute injury (a strain, a wrench, a fall), where the goal is limiting inflammation. For chronic, recurring tension, heat is the better choice. Cold contracts; heat opens. You want the latter.

Building a daily *recovery habit.*

04

Pain relief is what you do once. Recovery is what you do every day. Fifteen minutes, well placed, is more powerful than a weekend spa session.

The 15-minute daily routine

Morning · 2 min

3 chin tucks · 5 slow neck rotations each direction · 10 shoulder rolls. Do it before you check your phone — sets the day's posture baseline.

Midday · 3 min

Stand. Walk 60 seconds. Doorway chest stretch (30s each side). Two slow looks up at the ceiling. Resets accumulated tech-neck.

Evening · 15 min (device)

A full 15-minute Neck.Buddy session — heat & massage on the trapezius and base of skull. The deepest release of the day, and the easiest one to skip. Don't.

Sunday · long reset

Pair a second 15-minute Neck.Buddy session with the full exercise routine in the companion guide, *The 10-Minute Daily Neck Reset*.

WHY CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY

A 90-minute massage once a month does almost nothing for chronic muscle tension. A 15-minute session four nights a week is transformative. Your body adapts to what you do **often**, not what you do **occasionally**.

When to see *a doctor.*

The vast majority of neck pain is muscular and self-treatable. But a small set of symptoms always warrants professional attention — we'd rather over-warn than under-warn.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION PROMPTLY IF YOU EXPERIENCE:

- ✓ Pain that radiates down the arm, especially with tingling, numbness, or weakness
- ✓ Loss of bladder or bowel control alongside neck pain
- ✓ Severe pain following a fall, car accident, or impact
- ✓ Fever, unexplained weight loss, or stiff neck with headache and light sensitivity
- ✓ Difficulty swallowing or persistent hoarseness
- ✓ Pain that wakes you from sleep night after night, not relieved by changing position

None of these are common. But all of them are reasons to skip the home routine and call your GP or NHS 111.

For everyday tension

For the dull, recurring ache this handbook is written for — you have everything you need to start. The science is on your side. The protocol is simple. The hardest part is doing it for the first three weeks until it becomes a habit.



The body that is cared for daily rarely needs to be rescued.

A closing note

Here's to feeling like *yourself again.*

Your neck has been waiting a long time for you to listen. Start tonight. The first three weeks are the hardest — after that, the routine starts running itself.

Getting the most from your Neck.Buddy

- ✓ Use it for 15 minutes most evenings — consistency beats long sessions
- ✓ Pair it with the routine in the companion guide, *The 10-Minute Daily Neck Reset*
- ✓ Charge it weekly, even if you haven't used it — keeps the battery healthy
- ✓ Wipe the heating plates with a dry cloth after each session
- ✓ Keep it on the sofa or bedside table, not in a drawer — visible = used

What the first month feels like

Week 1

Sessions feel luxurious but mild. You'll notice warmth in the trapezius you've been missing for years.

Week 2

Mornings begin to feel different. Less stiffness turning your head on waking. The routine starts to stick.

Week 4

Tension headaches ease. Range of motion improves visibly. The device becomes part of your evenings by default.

NEED A HAND?

Anything at all — a question about your device, a stretch you're not sure about — email support@neckbuddy.com and a real person will get back to you.

Here's to feeling like yourself again.

— THE NECK.BUDDY TEAM