

An acute wry neck is the sudden onset of **neck pain** accompanied by **spasm of the neck muscles**.

The main symptom is pain localized to one side of the neck. The pain can be referred to the head or shoulder region. The neck feels “stuck” in one position and attempted movements to free it usually results in sharp spasms of pain. Think of these joints becoming jammed or locked, rather like a door jamming on its hinge. The result is a painful, protective muscle spasm.

Anyone can get a wry neck but it occurs typically in young people between 12 and 30 years of age.

The precise cause of a wry neck is unknown. It may be the result of a minor injury or simply sleeping with the neck in an unusual position. For many years the theory was that a “slipped disc” caused a wry neck, but with the **help** of modern diagnostic imaging the cause seems to be an **injury to the facet joints**. Contrary to popular belief, a wry neck is not caused by a cold draught on the neck.

Sometimes a wry neck can be caused by an **inflammation of the lymph glands** in children.



Advanced Physio Treatment

Fortunately an acute wry neck is a transient and self-limiting condition that can recover in a matter of days. **Advanced Physio's** therapists are skilled in treating most neck pain ailments and can effectively assist with pain relief and a rapid recovery.

Our Advanced Physio team use a variety of treatments, including **manual therapy** – a very effective treatment since it uses a combination of massage, joint mobilizations, stretches and strengthening exercises.

Patient support & self-help at home

To help relieve the pain and discomfort between treatment sessions, Advanced Physio would recommend that at home, patients do the following:

- **Heat and massage.** Applying a heat in the form of a hot face washer or heat pack to the painful area may help. Massage using an analgesic balm can also relieve symptoms.
- **Sleeping and pillows.** Avoid sleeping on too many pillows. Pillows should support the head without bending the neck to an angle.
- **Tailored Exercise.** Keep neck mobile within patient's comfort zone. **Advanced Physio** can design gentle exercise that aids a more rapid recovery.
- **Posture.** Keep a good posture during all tasks. As part of a patient's treatment, our physiotherapist will demonstrate how to achieve this.
- **Driving.** Driving during the initial period of a wry neck should be avoided; the inability to get full rotation of the head to view oncoming traffic is hazardous.