



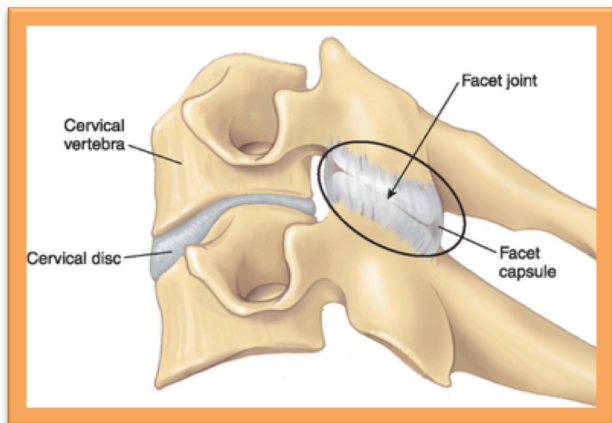
CERVICAL FACET JOINT SPRAIN

WHAT IS CERVICAL FACET JOINT IRRITATION?

A cervical facet joint sprain can be defined as an irritation, dysfunction, rotation or compression at the specific spinal joint that connects one vertebra to another, either above or below.

ANATOMY FACTS:

1. There are 7 cervical vertebra;
2. Each of these vertebra connect to the
3. vertebra above and below via facet joints and the intervertebral disc, together known as the functional unit;
4. The functional unit allow for movement, support our head and upright posture.
5. Facet joints play an important role in spine shock absorbing and stabilizing.
6. The facet joints have connective tissue supporting them



CAUSES OF A CERVICAL FACET JOINT SPRAIN:

- Excessive bending, twisting or extended the head and neck
- Intervertebral disc degeneration causing increased load on the facet joints
- Inappropriate stretching without warming up e.g. overextending first thing in the morning
- Poor posture
- Sedentary lifestyle

DIAGNOSIS:

A thorough subjective examination will look at the current history of the condition including aggravating and easing factors, mechanism of injury, work and lifestyle factors and reported symptoms.

The physiotherapist will check your range of motion, review posture, palpate for pain, stiffness and abnormally rotated joints.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Morning stiffness;
- Decreased range of motion;
- Tightness through thoracic spine;
- Pain on spinal extension such as looking upwards
- Sudden onset of neck pain
- Localised pain to a specific area;
- Muscle spasm.



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PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- Traction
- Stretches
- Muscle energy techniques
- Lifestyle changes
- Electrotherapy
- Gym programs
- Active release techniques
- Dry Needling
- Trunk and neck strengthening
- Education
- Postural education and programs

PROGNOSIS:

Minor irritations can often settle in 3-4 days with appropriate treatment although these can persist for 3 or more weeks. It's important to note that even with symptomatic relief within weeks that the joint is often recovering for a longer period and stability exercises are important.