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Get Fit. **Life Tip.**

Ab Exercises and Neck Pain

Don't let neck pain be the reason you don't workout your abdominal muscles. Neck pain while engaging in abdominal exercises, is common but can be avoided. A good rule of thumb when working out your abs is to start with simpler ab exercises and working your way up to advanced ones. By doing this, not only will you will learn proper form but your abs and deep cervical flexors (of the neck) will become strong enough to support your head while engaging your core. Another way to ensure you engage your core and not your neck is breathing properly, exhaling during the contraction of the crunch. *Note: It is always recommended to consult with a fitness professional with any questions.*

Reasons for neck pain during ab exercises:

- " Being new to exercise, particularly abdominal exercises
- " Poor range of motion
- " Excessive pulling on your neck during abdominal exercises
- " Poor posture from sitting all day
- " Weak stabilizers
- " Excessive head/neck movement during exercise

Ways to avoid neck pain while during ab exercises:

- " Stretch your neck muscles before and after your ab exercises
- " Proper breathing (exhale during the contraction of the crunch)
- " Practice good form (curl your spine and lift your shoulders off the floor)
- " Isolate your core muscles instead of pulling on your neck
- " Build your core strength by starting with easier exercises such as planks, medicine ball twists, cable rotations and a basic crunch

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