Relax Your “Stress Triangle”
Exercises to Relieve Headache and Tension

Traffic gets worse. It’s your busy season at work. The kids are arguing. Your shoulders are tense, your neck aches and you feel as if your head is gripped in a vise! If you hadn’t already realized it, your body is saying loud and clear that you’re stressed out!

The head, neck and shoulder areas (which form the “stress triangle”) are the places we hold much of our tension. Learning how to release the tension in these muscles can help us relax and “de-stress.”

Find Your “Stress Triangle”
Place your left hand on your right shoulder. Move your fingers halfway in toward your neck. You are at one point of the triangle. The second point is the same place off your left shoulder. The third point is on your forehead, between your eyes. This “Stress Triangle” is where we hold much of our tension.

Why Tense Muscles Hurt
Your muscles tighten to protect you. That was important to your prehistoric ancestors who needed to fight or run. But usually, you don’t need that protection. When your muscle shortens and then holds that position, “metabolites” (the waste products from muscle activity) get trapped, causing pain. The pain is released when the muscle regains its natural length.

See the reverse side of this flyer for stress-relieving stretches you can do anywhere and anytime.
Welcome Release

At work, at home or wherever you are, take a few moments to release stress. Use these exercises once an hour, if necessary. You’ll feel better and prevent tension from building up in your body.

Stretch Away Tension

These simple stretches and rolls can help relieve tightness in your “Stress Triangle.”

**Neck roll.** Stretch your right ear to your right shoulder, keeping your left shoulder down. Roll your head down (your chin should be on your chest). Continue to your left side. Do rolls from side to side. Begin with eight, build up to 16.

**Shoulder shrug.** Move your shoulders as if you were drawing a big circle with them, one at a time. Start with four, build up to eight times, going clockwise, then counterclockwise.

**Pick fruit.** With one hand, reach up as if you were picking an apple from a tree slightly ahead of you. Go from one arm to the other, building up to eight times on each side.

**Massage yourself.** Use your right hand to work on your left shoulder, and use your left hand on your right shoulder. Work your fingers gently, but firmly, beginning with your left shoulder blade, moving up toward the neck and including the scalp.

**Standing body roll.** Let your head roll forward until your chin is on your chest. Keep rolling down as your knees begin to bend. When your hands are hanging near your knees, rest there a moment and slowly roll back up. Work up to ten times.

For more information about PacifiCare’s African American Health Solutions, visit www.pacificare.com/aahs

Products and services are offered by one or more of the following PacifiCare family of companies: Health plan products and services are offered by PacifiCare of Arizona, Inc., PacifiCare of California, PacifiCare of Colorado, Inc., PacifiCare of Nevada, Inc., PacifiCare of Oklahoma, Inc., PacifiCare of Oregon, Inc., PacifiCare of Texas, Inc., PacifiCare of Washington, Inc., PacifiCare Dental of Colorado, Inc., PacifiCare Behavioral Health of California, Inc., and PacifiCare Dental (in California). Indemnity insurance products (including PPO, medical, dental, life/AD&D and short term disability products) are underwritten by PacifiCare Life and Health Insurance Company, PacifiCare Life Assurance Company and American Medical Security Life Insurance Company. Other products and services are offered by PacifiCare Health Plan Administrators, Inc., PacifiCare Southwest Operations, Inc., RxSolutions, Inc., SeniorCo, Inc., PacifiCare Behavioral Health, Inc. and American Medical Security Life Insurance Company. PacifiCare® is a federally registered trademark of PacifiCare Life and Health Insurance Company.

For Arizona Residents: Offered by PacifiCare of Arizona, Inc. or offered and underwritten by PacifiCare Life and Health Insurance Company, PacifiCare Life Assurance Company and American Medical Security Life Insurance Company.


792-020906-EW
PEW206415-000