

Suboccipital Stretch by Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT

The suboccipital muscles are aptly named considering they are located just below the occipital bone - the ridge at the back of your head where your neck meets your skull.



These are the muscles that allow you to laterally flex, extend, and rotate your head.

Although these muscles can be described as relatively small in comparison to other muscles found in the human body, nonetheless they are the root cause of many problems.

For most of us, stress and poor

posture force the suboccipital muscles to work continuously and therefore these muscles can become rather fatigued and sore.

Quite often clients will report pain in the back of the neck/head area and indicate they feel this is the source of a tension headache.

So, what can you do to eliminate the source of these headaches?

A Registered Massage Therapist trained in trigger point removal can provide you with much relief. In between treatments you can perform stretches as a form of preventative maintenance.

To begin, first sit in a chair with your spine as erect as possible. Next, interlace your fingers and place your clasped hands behind the back of your head. Make sure to bring your elbows to the front so that you are cradling

your head. Take a nice deep breathe, exhale and slowly lower your elbows towards the floor. Concentrate on keeping your back straight and your shoulders down. When your chin touches your chest, hold the stretch for thirty seconds. Repeat at least three times daily for optimum results.



Tip: If you are in the midst of a tension headache, hold the stretch for four to five minutes as this will often alleviate the source of the pain. - Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT