



## **SPRAINS and STRAINS** **(neck and back)**

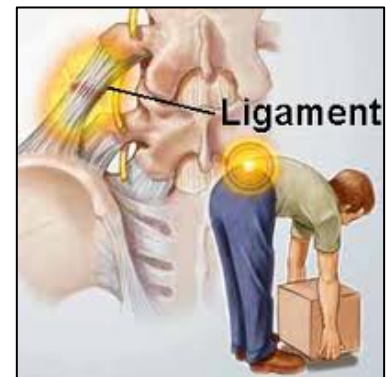


### **What are sprains and strains?**

A sprain is an injury to a ligament, which holds bone to bone. A strain is an injury that occurs to muscle or tendon, which connects muscle to bone. The injury can lead to inflammation or tears in the tissue. Normally, muscles, tendons, and ligaments around the neck and back support the spinal column, the weight of the body, and are needed for all movement. Sprains and strains are very common injuries.

### **What causes sprains and strains?**

Sprains and strains occur after an abnormal motion or force that causes the body to move beyond normal range of motion. Sudden twisting, falling, or pulling can result in injury. It can also be caused by a single instance of improper lifting or by overstressing the back muscles. A chronic strain can result from overuse involving prolonged, repetitive movement.



### **What are possible signs and symptoms?**

Signs and symptoms are different with each individual but typically include:

- Pain, aching, tenderness in neck, shoulders, back, and buttocks
- Decreased range of motion or stiffness leading to difficulty walking, bending forward or sideways, or standing straight
- Sensory disturbance (such as pins and needles) to the arms & legs
- Muscle spasms

### **How does physical therapy help?**

- Protect, rest, ice – bracing may be recommended
- ROM – active, active assistive or passive
- Gradual stretching and strengthening
- Stabilization and postural awareness
- Manual therapy – massage, mobilization, stretching
- Modalities – electrical stimulation, ultrasound, cold laser

