

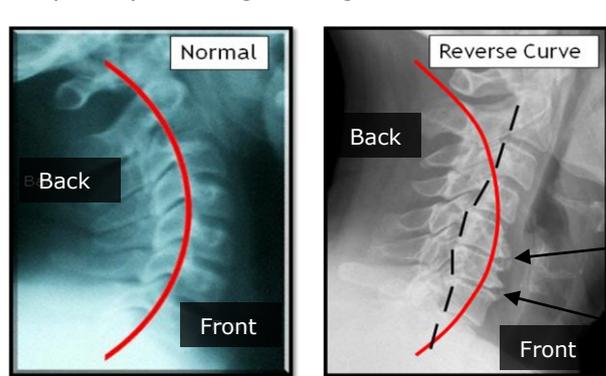
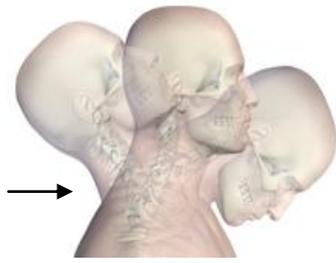
On the Road to Recovery. Be 'ahead' of the Rest!

According to UK government road safety statistics for 2006, there was a road traffic accident approximately every two minutes! The most common type of injury suffered



sustained was whiplash and it was estimated that more than a quarter of a million people were affected. Shocking statistics, however, considering the frenetic lifestyle we lead today, hardly surprising. Whiplash is an injury that occurs when the head and neck experience a sudden, sharp motion either from behind, in front or from the side. Sporting activities, fairground rides or simply tripping off a kerb, can also cause whiplash. The injury affects the bones, muscles, nerves and tendons of the neck with symptoms occurring immediately after an accident or within hours, days, weeks, months or even years after the event. Symptoms of whiplash may include: pain or stiffness to the neck, jaw, shoulders or arms, dizziness, headache, loss of feeling in an arm or hand, nausea, vomiting,

visual problems and feelings of depression. A recent study researched improvement levels of 250 whiplash sufferers. The results showed that whiplash injuries played a major role on the health of this group as only 50% recovered after 2 years. Other studies show that the prediction for full recovery ranges from between 54-61%. One such study found that even after more than 10 years, 86% of the participants studied, still suffered from their original whiplash related symptoms. Extensive research has shown that patients who have suffered a whiplash injury develop spondylosis (degenerative osteoarthritis) approximately 6 times more frequently than age and gender matched control subjects.



In the two x-ray images, *fig 1* shows a normal side view of the neck of a 32 year old (female) who had no history of head and neck trauma, whereas *fig 2* shows an x-ray of a 43 year old (female) who experienced a 30 mph rear-impact accident 11 years ago. She had no neck problems prior to the accident. The black dotted line shows the change in her spinal alignment when compared to the red curve which shows her head leaning too far forward leading to poor posture. This puts extra pressure on the structures of the lower neck resulting in muscle tension. Degenerative bony spurs can be seen (indicated by the arrows) indicating osteoarthritis. This patient, since her accident, has suffered reduced neck movement,

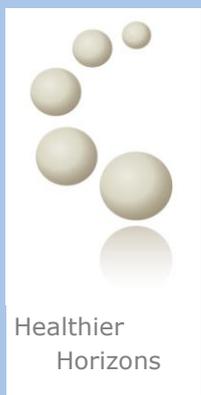
Degeneration - development of bony spurs: Cervical Spondylosis

pain and daily tension headaches, sited at the base of the skull. It is therefore not surprising that early intervention to aid recovery is vital if long-term damage is to be avoided.

What to do? The one thing **not** to do is use heat, rest and the prolonged use of a neck collar. In the long term, and, in most cases of whiplash, this treatment will have little or no effect. Clinical, and research evidence suggests, that the management of whiplash patients needs to change, recommending instead, active treatment such as Chiropractic, Physical Therapy and deep, muscle strengthening exercises. Research on whiplash shows that early treatment is superior to rest in the management of the condition.

How can I help? Firstly, I obtain a full medical history, then, identify the full extent of the injuries. This is followed by a postural and range of motion evaluation together with an orthopaedic (joints) and neurological (nerves) examination to assess the reduced movement patterns of the neck, etc. Using our on-site x-ray facilities, detailed images may be taken at this point to aid in diagnosis of the condition(s). I then explain my findings, suggest treatment, and discuss the patient's future management program. This includes our in-house muscular rehabilitation specialist who is an integral part of the patient's on-going treatment plan. We thus maximise the best possible outcome measures by improving the movement patterns of damaged muscle. Incidentally, the lady mentioned above, whose x-ray shows degeneration has made an excellent 80% recovery, and is still continuing to improve.

Michael



I would like to invite you to my Practice and take the opportunity of a **FREE** 30-minute Head and Neck Postural Assessment

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