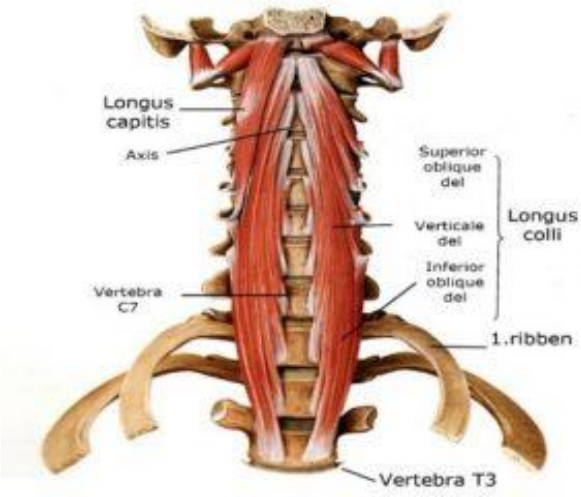
CHRONIC NECK PAIN

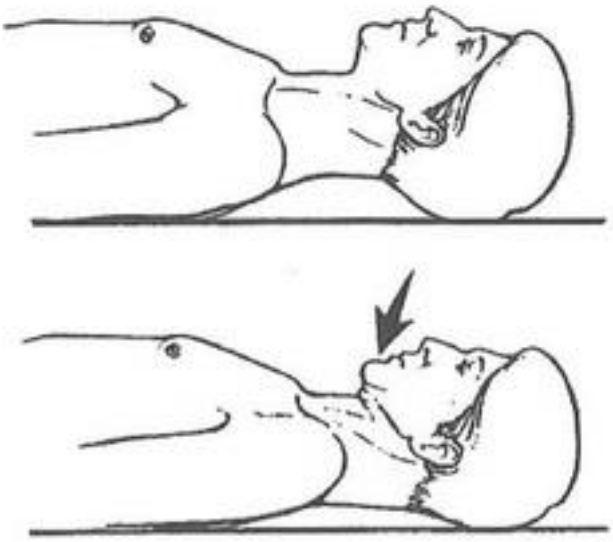
Research shows that approximately 70% of people will experience neck pain at some point in their life.

There are two layers of muscles in the neck. The superficial muscles are responsible for moving the neck. The deep muscles, known as the Deep Neck Flexors (DNFs), are small stabilising muscles that attach to the individual vertebrae and provide segmental stability. Chronic neck pain is often a result of weakness in the DNFs.



If DNF muscle activity is impaired the balance between the stabilisers at the front and back of the neck will be disrupted, resulting in a loss of proper cervical spine alignment and poor neck posture.

If the DNFs are not working well enough to stabilise the cervical vertebrae then the larger, more superficial muscles around the neck try to take on the stabilising role as well as continuing their role as neck movers, therefore they become overactive, overloaded and tight.



To reduce neck pain, we need to retrain the DNFs in order to better stabilise our cervical spine and to relax the superficial neck movers. The easiest way to turn on the DNFs is to gently tuck your chin in without turning on the larger neck muscles.

Your physiotherapist will be able to properly assess your Deep Neck Flexor function and clearly explain how to properly activate these muscles to reduce your neck pain.

Build up your DNF strength by holding a ‘chin tuck’ for 10 seconds x 10 reps, at least once per day.