

# Sweetwater Pain & Spine

Home Exercise Handout

## Cervical Stenosis / Myelopathy

**Cervical stenosis with myelopathy** occurs when narrowing of the spinal canal in the neck compresses the spinal cord, producing symptoms such as balance and gait difficulty, impaired fine motor coordination, and weakness or numbness in the arms and hands. These exercises target the key functional deficits of myelopathy—balance training, fine motor control, and postural correction—to help preserve independence, reduce fall risk, and minimize spinal cord tension. Perform them consistently each day, and promptly report any new or worsening weakness, numbness, or difficulty walking to our office.

### 1 Tandem Walking (Heel-to-Toe Gait)

10–15 steps • 1–2 sets • 1–2x daily

1



#### SET UP

Stand near a wall or countertop for immediate safety support.  
Wear supportive shoes.  
Stand tall with good posture and your core engaged.

2



#### HEEL-TO-TOE POSITION

Place one foot directly in front of the other.  
The heel of the front foot touches the toes of the back foot.  
Keep your body upright and steady.

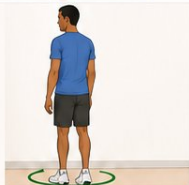
3



#### WALK FORWARD

Walk forward **10–15 steps** in a straight line.  
Gaze forward — not at the floor.  
Take your time and move with control.

4



#### TURN AND RETURN

Turn carefully at the end.  
Walk back to your starting point using the same heel-to-toe pattern.  
Use the wall or countertop as needed for support.

### 2 Single-Leg Balance (Fall Prevention)

20–60 sec per leg • 1–2 sets • 1–2x daily

1



#### SET UP

Stand near a wall or countertop for immediate support.  
Wear supportive shoes.  
Stand tall with good posture and your core engaged.

2



#### LIFT AND HOLD

Shift your weight onto one leg.  
Lift your other foot 2–4 inches off the floor.  
Hold for the target duration.  
Keep your hips level and gaze forward.

3



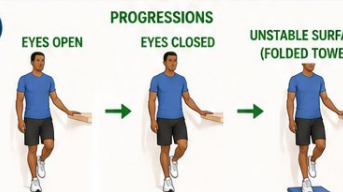
USE SUPPORT IF NEEDED



#### SAFETY FIRST

Do not grip the support unless needed.  
Touch the wall or countertop immediately if you feel unsteady.  
Safety is the priority at all times.

4



#### PROGRESS

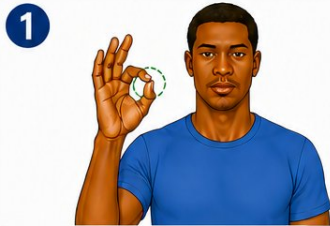
Advance your balance over time:

- Eyes open
- Eyes closed
- Standing on a folded towel (unstable surface)

Progress at your own pace.  
Challenge yourself safely!

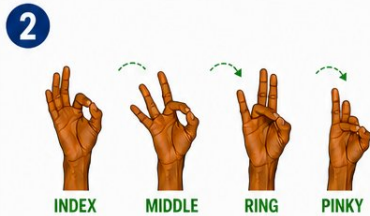
### 3 Finger Opposition (Fine Motor Coordination)

10–15 reps per hand • 1–2 sets • 1–2x daily



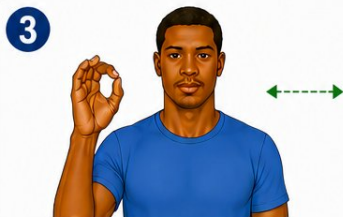
#### 1 START POSITION

Hold your hand in front of you with your palm facing in. Touch the tip of your index finger to the tip of your thumb. Make a clear "O" shape.



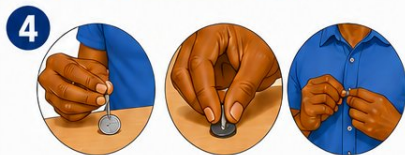
#### 2 SEQUENCE

Move your thumb to touch the tip of your middle finger, then ring finger, then pinky. Touch lightly and precisely. This completes one sequence.



#### 3 REVERSE

Reverse the sequence: pinky → ring → middle → index → thumb. Maintain smooth, controlled movements. Gradually increase speed while maintaining accuracy. Repeat for 10–15 reps per hand.



#### 4 PROGRESSIONS

Progress to picking up small coins or buttons. Practice buttoning and unbuttoning a shirt. Use both hands together or one at a time.

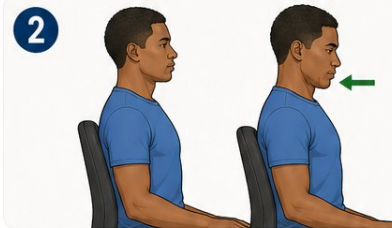
### 4 Postural Chin Tuck (Neutral Spine Reset)

Hold 5 sec • Perform every hour • At your desk



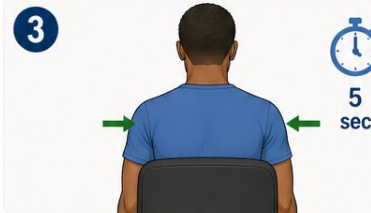
#### 1 SET UP

Sit upright in your chair with feet flat on the floor. Ears, shoulders, and hips stacked in a straight line. Relax your shoulders and lengthen your spine.



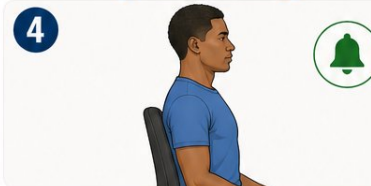
#### 2 CHIN TUCK

Gently draw your chin straight backward — creating a "double chin." Keep your eyes level. Do not tilt your head up or down.



#### 3 HOLD & SQUEEZE

While holding the chin tuck, gently squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Keep breathing normally.



#### 4 REPEAT & REMIND

Relax and return to neutral. Repeat throughout the day. Set a reminder hourly. This is one of the **highest-impact daily habits** for myelopathy self-management.

■ Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, new numbness or weakness, or worsening of symptoms, and contact our office. These exercises supplement but do not replace your provider's individualized plan.

Questions or concerns? Call Sweetwater Pain & Spine: (775) 870-1480

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