Assessment of the jugular pulses

Assessment of the jugular pulses is best done with the head elevated and it is normal to see pulses at the level of the heart. With the head being elevated, make sure nothing is occluding the jugular veins to give a false positive such as a neck chain. The vein will fail to empty with the occlusion of the vein with your hand and then the release of the occlusion when cardiac disease is present.