

Computer & Desk Stretches

Prolonged sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain. But, by taking a five or ten minute break to stand and do a series of stretches, your whole body can feel better. Its also helpful to learn to stretch spontaneously, throughout the day, stretching any particular area of the body that feels tense for a minute or two. This will help greatly in reducing and controlling unwanted tension and pain.

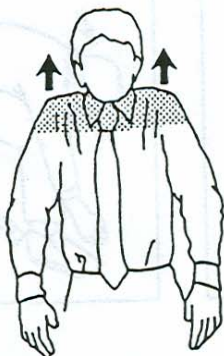
HOW TO STRETCH

- Stretch to a point where you feel a mild tension and relax as you hold the stretch.
- The feeling of stretch tells you whether you are stretching correctly or not.
- If you are stretching correctly, the feeling of stretch should slightly subside as you hold the stretch.
- Do not bounce.
- The long-sustained, mild stretch reduces unwanted muscle tension and tightness.
- Stretches should be held generally for 10-30 seconds, depending on which stretch you are doing.

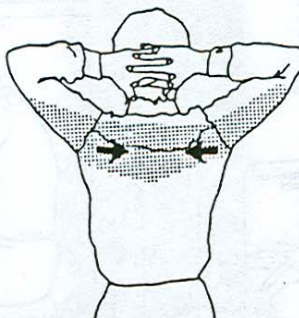
- Breathe slowly, rhythmically and under control.
- Relax your mind and body as much as possible.
- Always stretch within your comfortable limits, never to the point of pain.
- Do not compare yourself to others. We are all different. Comparisons only lead to overstretching.
- Any stretch feeling that grows in intensity or becomes painful as you hold the stretch is an overstretch.



- Separate and straighten fingers.
- Hold 10 sec.
- Relax, then bend fingers at knuckles.
- Hold for 10 sec.



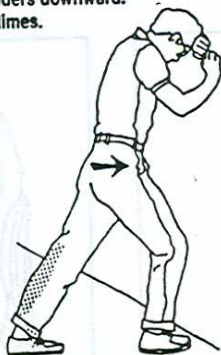
- Raise top of shoulders. Hold 3-5 sec.
- Relax shoulders downward.
- Repeat 2-3 times.



- Interlace fingers behind head, elbows out to sides.
- Pull shoulder blades together.
- Hold 8-10 sec.
- Relax.



- Interlace fingers and turn palms upwards above your head.
- Straighten arms above your head.
- Hold for 10-20 sec.
- Repeat 3 times.



- Stand a little ways from a solid support.
- Place one leg in front of you on floor.
- Slowly move your hips forward to feel a stretch in the calf of the straight leg.
- Keep heel on floor and toes pointed straight ahead.
- Hold easy stretch 30 sec.
- Stretch both legs.



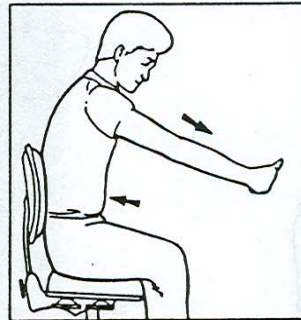
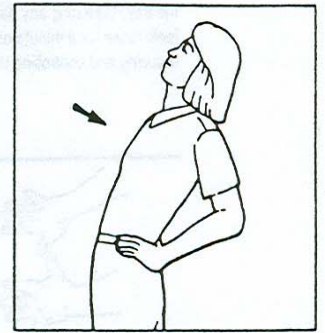
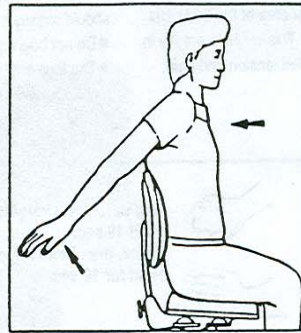
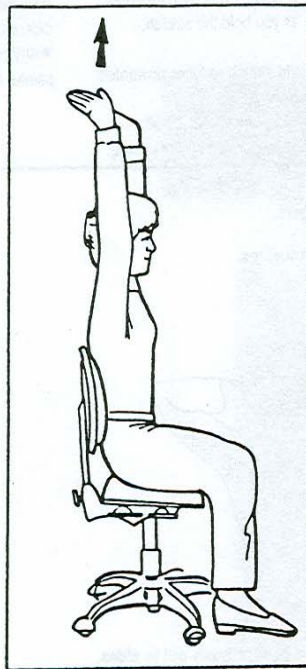
- Knees slightly bent, palms on lower back just above hips, fingers pointing down
- Gently push palms forward to create an extension in the lower back
- Hold for 10-12 sec. Repeat twice.



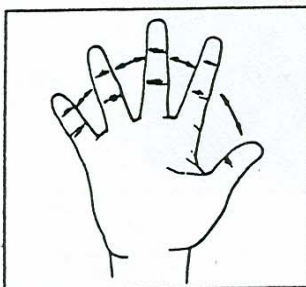
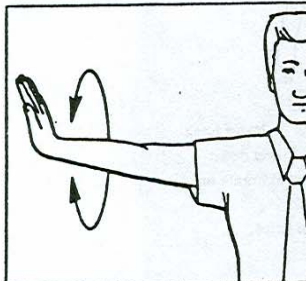
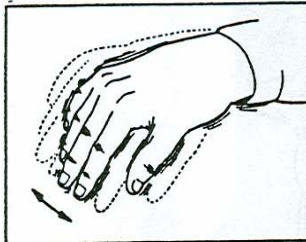
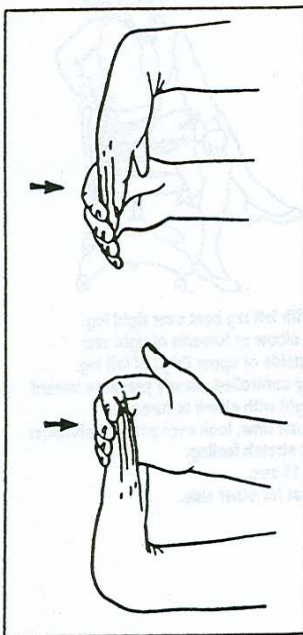
- Sit with left leg bent over right leg.
- Rest elbow or forearm of right arm on outside of upper thigh of left leg.
- Apply controlled, steady pressure toward the right with elbow or forearm.
- At same time, look over your left shoulder to get stretch feeling.
- Hold 15 sec.
- Repeat for other side.

Remember: Break up your computer work with breaks, non-computer tasks, and movement.

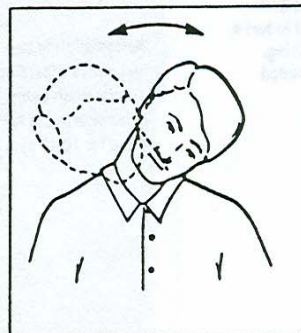
Upper Body Stretches



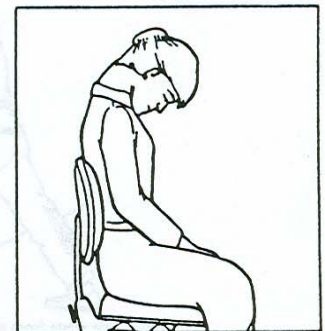
Shoulder, Arm and Hand Stretches



Neck Stretches



Relax



Exercises for Office Workers

I. Office workers who must sit in front of a machine for long periods throughout the day very often suffer muscle tension and fatigue due to the repetitive nature of their tasks. This can lead to headaches, blurred vision, aching muscles and joints, irritability and many other non-specific ill feelings. The ideal solution to these problems is to break up the repetitive tasks with other work routines or frequent rest breaks. Oftentimes, this is not possible, so what can be done?

The tension and tightness that builds up in the muscles of the neck, face, shoulders and back can be relieved by the performance of some simple exercises which can be accomplished at one's desk.

The following routine can be completed in the span of five minutes or less and will be a refreshing relief for tense muscles and tight joints. Do these exercises whenever you feel tightness, soreness or tension in any part of your body. Concentrate on those muscles that feel the most tense, tight or sore.

I. Sitting at desk

A. Neck muscle exercises

1. Lateral bend
Bend neck to right, hold five seconds, bend neck to left, hold five seconds - repeat three to six times.
2. Vertical bend
Bend neck forward tucking chin into chest, hold five seconds, bend neck backward, hold five seconds - repeat three to five times.
3. Neck twist
Twist neck to right, hold five seconds, twist neck to left, hold five seconds, repeat three to five times.
4. Neck rotations
Starting with neck bent forward, chin tucked into chest, slowly rotate neck in a circular motion clockwise; complete one full revolution. Repeat, rotating neck counterclockwise - repeat three to five times.

B. Eye muscle exercises

1. Close eyelids tightly, hold five seconds; open eyelids wide, hold five seconds, repeat three to five times.
2. Keeping head facing straight ahead, look to left, hold three seconds, look to right, hold three seconds, look upward, hold three seconds, look downward, hold three seconds. Repeat three times.
3. Eye rotations
Slowly rotate eyes around in their sockets starting by looking downward (head held straight), then rotating in a circular motion clockwise, then counterclockwise. Repeat three times.

C. Jaw muscle exercises

1. Open mouth as wide as possible, stick out tongue, hold for three seconds, repeat three times.
2. Move lower jaw to right, hold for three seconds, move lower jaw to left, hold for three seconds, repeat three times.

3. Tighten all jaw muscles at once, hold three seconds, repeat three times.

D. Shoulder muscle exercises

1. Lift right shoulder only up toward right ear, hold five seconds. Lift left shoulder toward left ear, hold five seconds. Repeat three to five times.
2. Lift both shoulders up simultaneously, hold five seconds, repeat three times.
3. Roll shoulders forward, hold five seconds, repeat three times.
4. Roll shoulders back, hold five seconds, repeat three times.
5. Roll shoulders forward and backward in a circular motion. Repeat five times.
6. Roll shoulders backward and forward in a circular motion, repeat five times.

E. Trunk muscle exercises

1. Twist whole trunk (upper body) to right, hold five seconds. Twist trunk to left, hold five seconds. Repeat three times each direction.
2. Bend trunk to right, hold five seconds. Bend trunk to left, hold five seconds. Repeat three times each side.
3. Bend trunk forward from waist, keeping upper back straight, hold five seconds. Bend trunk backward by arching back, hold five seconds. Repeat three times.

F. Upper body

1. Reach upward with arms and stretch toward ceiling, hold for five seconds, repeat three times.
2. Reach outward with arms toward walls, keeping arms straight. Hold stretch for five seconds, repeat three times.