

Office Stretches

Why is stretching important?

No matter how well a designed workstation is, problems may arise if attention to workflow and setup is ignored. Working at a computer often involves very few changes in the body position. This lack of movement can lead to muscle pain and strain.

What can be done to minimize pain and strains?

It is recommended that a person takes a mini-break every 30 - 60 minutes besides the scheduled breaks. Examples are standing up and stretching, walking around, performing tasks that involve standing, getting a glass of water, and using any of these stretches as mini-breaks while also strengthening your body. Our body is meant to move and not remain stagnant or static.

- ✚ Vary the work tasks. Break up keyboarding tasks by doing other job duties or tasks that involve moving around or changing body positions.
- ✚ Look away from the screen occasionally and focus your eyes on an object farther away.
- ✚ Take your regular breaks away from your desk to ease muscle ache, eye strain and stress.
- ✚ Relax your muscles with deep belly breathing.
- ✚ Hold the stretch for a reasonable time – a count of 5 to 10
- ✚ BREATHE NORMALLY
- ✚ Do NOT bounce, pull/push excessively or lock your joints. You should feel a stretch NO pain.

Caution: If you have an injury or any type of reoccurring discomforts, you should report your injury/symptoms and obtain a medical evaluation.

These stretching exercises are not provided to cure any existing problems, but they may help in preventing any future ones. Individuals with previous injury should consult with their physician before performing these exercises on a routine basis. Always obtain medical consent prior to starting any exercise programme.

You may feel tension and tightness while performing some of these **you should not feel pain.** If you feel pain back off the stretch a little until it feels more comfortable.

Wrist and finger stretch

a) Start with your hand open.



b) Make a fist. Keep your thumb straight, not tucked under your fingers.



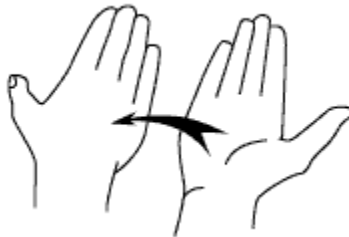
c) Slide your finger tips up your palm so the tips of your fingers are near the base of your fingers and you should feel a stretch. Do not force your fingers with your other hand if something is painful.



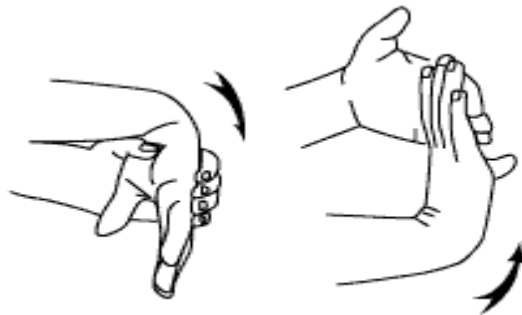
With your hand open and facing down, gently bend wrist from side to side, as far as possible. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



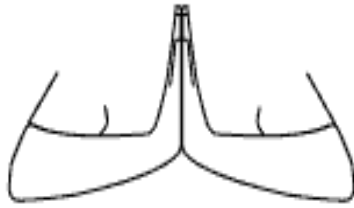
Start by stretching your arm and hand out and slowly rotate the wrist down until you feel a stretch. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Next, rotate the palm up until you feel a stretch. Repeat 3 times.



Stretch your arm out maintaining level posture and drop your shoulder. Grasp your hand and hold your fingers with the other hand. Slowly bend your wrist down until you feel a stretch. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times. Then slowly bend your wrist up until you feel the stretch. Hold and relax as above. **Relax and take a deep breath.**

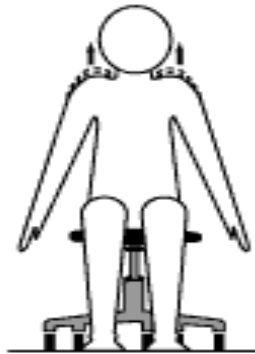


Sitting with your elbows on the table and palms together, slowly lower wrists to the table until you feel a stretch (your elbows will move outward a bit). Be sure to keep your palms together throughout the stretch. Hold 5 to 7 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times.



Shoulder Shrug: The purpose of the shoulder shrug is to relieve early symptoms of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.

Raise the top of your shoulders towards your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3 to 5 seconds. Then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do these 2 or 3 times. **Relax and take a deep breath.**

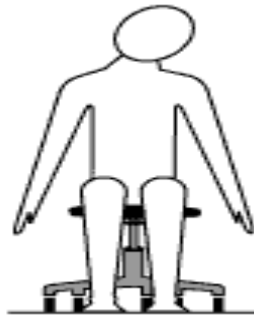


Head Glide: The head glide helps to stretch your chest, neck and shoulder muscles.

Sit or stand upright. Without lifting your chin, glide your head straight back. You know you are doing this exercise right if it gives you the feeling of a double chin. Hold for 20 counts and repeat 5 to 10 times.



Neck stretches: Drop your head slowly to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat on the right side. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, turn your head all the way to the left, then turn all the way to the right.



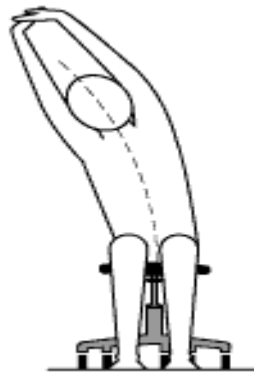
Shoulder Roll: Slowly roll your shoulders backward five times in a circular motion. Next, roll your shoulders forwards.



Chest stretch: Place your hands behind your head, and squeeze your shoulder blades together.

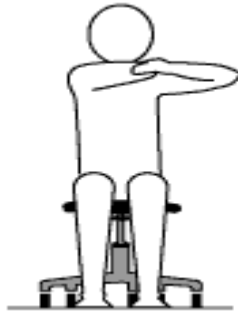


Back / Side Stretch: Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keeping the elbows straight. Press arms as far back as you can. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right. In a similar way, you can also bring your arms in front of your body, or behind to stretch the shoulder blades and chest. **Relax and take a deep breath.**





Middle / Upper Back Stretch: Hold your right arm with your left hand just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow toward your left shoulder. Hold the stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat with your left arm. **Relax and take a deep breath.**



Back Curl (will also stretch your legs): Grasp your shin. Lift the leg off the floor. Bend forward (curling your back), and reach your nose to your knee. Repeat with the other leg. **Relax and take a deep breath.**



Ankle Flex and Stretch: Hold one foot off the floor with your leg straight. Alternately flex your ankle (point your toes up) and extend (point your toes down). Repeat with the other leg.



Leg Lift: Sit forward on the chair so that your back is not touching the chair's back. Place feet flat on the floor. With a straight leg, lift one foot a few inches off the floor. Hold momentarily, and return your foot to the floor. Repeat with the other leg. **Relax and take a deep breath.**



Standing stretch: When standing, keep knees slightly bent. Place your hands on your lower back and gently push your hands forward while leaning back slightly.

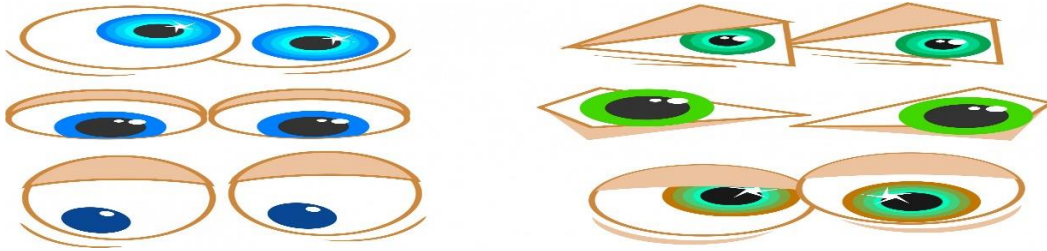


Hip stretch: Sit with one leg across the other. Place your arm or elbow on the outside of the crossed leg. Gently apply pressure, while looking the opposite way. Repeat with the other leg. **Relax and take a deep breath.**



Adapted from: Office Ergonomics Safety Guide, by CCOHS.

Eye Stretches



Look away from your computer, across the room out a window or down a corridor to VARY the visual distance and to change the light 15 – 20 feet away ONCE per hour.

Eye rolling close eyes look left and pause for a count of 5 – then right for a count of 5 – then look up and pause for a count of 5 – then down for 5.

Diagonal exercise look to the top left and then down to bottom right hold for a count of 5. Then top right to bottom left and hold for a count of 5.

Big Eye Roll close eyes or open make big circles 5 times each way.

Cross Eyes hold your thumb at arm's length and slowly bring your thumb to your eyes changing the focus as your thumb draws near. Go to a cross eyes and then slowly reverse to arm's length. Do this 2 times per day.

Palming your eyes place the palm of your hands over your eyes and rest your eyes in the dark. Relax the muscles around your eyes, eyebrows and cheeks, count to 10 complete every two hours.

Like any muscle when used, your eye muscles get stronger and you should feel the muscles as you do these exercises. Some suggest that your eye sight will improve.

Remember to **BREATHE**. We tend to hold our breath when stretching.

Thank you for taking a self care moment!