

Desk Stretches

Sitting for long periods at your desk or computer can cause muscle aches and pain. Taking a break to do 5-10 minutes of stretching can help the whole body relax and can help to reduce unwanted tension and pain.

Stretching should be done slowly and without bouncing. It should feel like a gentle stretch and be held for 5-20 seconds. The tension in your muscles should diminish while holding the stretch. If it doesn't, you should back off the stretch slightly and hold at this reduced stretch.

After holding an easy stretch you can gently move into a greater stretch and hold this stretch for 15-30 seconds. This stretch should also feel good, so if you have increased tension or pain you are overstretching.

The key to stretching correctly is to do it slowly and relaxed. Breathe slowly and focus on the area being stretched. Hold stretches to the tension that feels good to you (no pain should be felt). At first, do not worry about how far you are able to stretch. Increased range will come with regular stretching.



Spread your fingers until a stretch is felt.
Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax



Bend your fingers at the knuckles.
Hold for 10 seconds. Relax
Repeat stretches 2-3 more times.



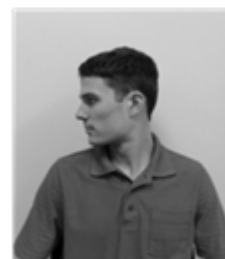
To release tension in the face, raise your eyebrows, open your eyes wide and open your mouth wide. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax.
Repeat 2-3 more times.



A. Tilt your head toward your shoulder without turning your head. Hold at a gentle stretch for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat on the opposite side for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat exercise on both sides 2-3 more times.



B. For more of a stretch you can place one hand behind your back, then using opposite arm gently pull your head to the side (see above).



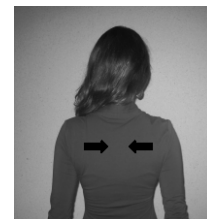
While sitting erect in your chair, turn your chin toward your shoulder until feeling a gentle stretch. Hold this stretch for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat to opposite side, holding 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat exercise to both sides.



To stretch your mid back, interlace fingers behind your head and tilt your body to one side.
Hold for 10 seconds. Relax.
Repeat by tilting to opposite side. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax.



Interlace fingers behind your head and squeeze your shoulder blades together until feeling a gentle tension between the shoulder blades.
Hold this mild stretch for 10 seconds. Relax.
Repeat this exercise 2-3 more times.



B. This picture shows an alternate position for your arms when doing the exercise at left.

To relax your shoulders, raise your shoulders into a shrug. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax.

Repeat 2-3 more times.

Variations: Move your shoulders forward and backward, or do backward circles.





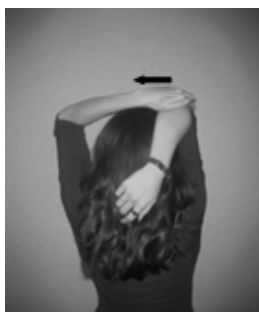
While sitting erect in your chair, interlace your fingers with arms outstretched in front of you, with palms facing away from you. Reach forward slightly feeling a gentle stretch by your shoulder blades.

Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax.
Repeat exercise 2-3 more times.



With fingers interlaced and palms facing away from you, reach your hands overhead and slightly behind until a gentle stretch is felt in arms and upper rib cage. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax.

Repeat stretch 2-3 more times.



Hold left elbow with your right hand and pull your elbow behind your head until a mild pull is felt in your shoulder or back of upper arm. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat on opposite side, holding again for 10 seconds.

Repeat exercise on both sides 2-3 more times.



With fingers interlaced behind your back, palms facing away from you, pull hands away from your body until a gentle stretch is felt in your shoulders and arms. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax.

Repeat 2-3 more times



Gently tilt your head forward until feeling a mild stretch in the back of your neck.

Hold stretch for 10 seconds.
Do not stretch into pain.
Return head to upright position.
Repeat 2-3 more times.



While sitting in an upright position, pull your head back slightly then slowly look upward toward the ceiling until a mild stretch is felt in the front of your neck. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Tilt chin slightly downward and raise your head back to an upright position. You should not feel pain. Relax.
Repeat the exercise 2-3 more times.



Hold your left elbow with your right hand and gently pull your arm across your body toward your opposite shoulder until a mild stretch is felt in back of shoulder. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax.

Repeat with opposite arm.

Repeat exercise with both arms 2-3 more times.



Holding arms out in front of you, bend wrists upward then downward, holding each position 10 seconds. Repeat in both directions 2-3 more times.



Pull one knee to chest and toward opposite shoulder with both hands until feeling a gentle stretch on the outer side of your thigh/hip. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat exercise with your other leg. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat exercise on both legs 2-3 more times.



Sit with left leg crossed over right leg. Reach with right arm for back of chair as shown. Turn body until a gentle stretch is felt in hip and lower back.

Hold stretch for 10-20 seconds.

Repeat on other side for a 10-20 second hold.

Repeat on both sides 2-3 more times each.



While sitting on edge of chair, straighten one leg, lean forward from your hips until a gentle pull is felt in the back of your thigh. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat stretch with other leg and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat exercise with both legs 2-3 more times.



To stretch your calf muscle and heel cord, stand with your hands on a wall, placing one leg back. Bend your front leg and slowly move your hips forward toward the wall keeping the heel of the leg on the floor. Move forward until a mild pull is felt in your heel cord and back of calf. Hold stretch for a count of 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat with other leg holding also for 10 seconds. Relax.

Repeat this stretch with both legs 2-3 more times each.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.