

Try these stretches at your desk:



Upper Trapezius (Side of Neck)

Pull your head to one side, taking your ear toward your shoulder, while holding onto the chair with your other hand.

Keep both shoulders down and back, and do not let your head move forward.



Levator (Back of Neck)

Place one hand on the shoulder blade on the same side, with your elbow as high as possible. Turn your head away from that side. With

the other hand, pull your head down and toward the opposite side. Keep both shoulders down.



Chest

Place your fingertips above and behind your ears. Pull your elbows back without pushing your head forward, arching your back, or lifting your shoulders. Do not clasp your hands.



Rhomboid (Mid-Back)

Sit with your chair angled toward the corner of your desk. Reach across your body to hold the corner of your desk with one hand so that it is in front of your opposite knee. Pull your

body backward, rounding your mid-back. Tuck your head down and toward the corner of the desk.



Hamstring (Back of Thigh)

Sit on the front edge of the chair with one leg extended and your hands on the opposite knee. Keeping your back straight and your head and chest up, lean

forward from the hips. Keep your knee angled toward the ceiling and your foot relaxed. Variations: 1) Flex your foot. 2) Bend your knee.



Gluteals (Buttocks)

Sit on the front edge of the chair with one ankle on the opposite knee. Keeping your back straight and your head and chest up, lean forward from the hips. Variations: 1) To make it

easier, move the foot on the floor away from you to lower the supporting knee. 2) To increase the stretch, push down on the knee of the leg being stretched. Note: Pull up on your knee if you feel any discomfort in your knee.



Step Up to Wellness

Move and stretch at your desk



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Sitting at your desk for long periods of time can make you less alert; create tightness in your neck, shoulders, and back; and make your joints stiff. Prolonged sitting can also worsen your blood sugar levels and cholesterol levels and increase your risk of blood clots and other health factors. There are things you can do without even leaving your desk to improve these issues. You'll feel better and be more productive.

Good habits

It's important to move and stretch at your desk, and to keep moving throughout the day. Set an alarm on your computer, phone, or watch to remind you. Here are a few ideas:

- Walk around. Get up from your desk at least once every hour, or better yet, every 20 minutes.
- Walk to your co-worker's desk to discuss projects rather than talking on the phone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator. This is a great way to work your muscles and increase blood flow.
- Stand up when talking on the phone.
- Take a walk at lunch. This can minimize your afternoon fatigue.
- Breathe. Many people hold their breath when they concentrate. Remember to breathe slowly and evenly throughout the day. This can help lower your blood pressure and ease muscle tension.

You may be surprised to find that these simple exercises can make a big difference in how you feel and how much energy you have during the day.

Move around more

Try these simple exercises throughout the day, especially before stretching. Be sure to stay within a comfortable range of motion.

Stand Up, Sit Down

Stand up from your chair and sit back down. If possible, do this without using your hands.

As you sit, try to go as close to the chair as possible without fully sitting between repetitions. Keep your weight on your heels and your hips back at all times.

Repeat 2 to 10 times every time you stand up or sit down.

Neck Range of Motion

Tilt your head fully forward and then lift your chin up without dropping your head backward. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Tilt your head to the right and then to the left, keeping your chin lifted and not dropping toward your shoulder. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Rotate your head to the right and then to the left, keeping your chin lifted and not dropping toward your shoulder. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Shoulder Circles

Sitting tall, make big circles with your shoulders, moving them up, back, and then down. Emphasize the back and down motions, and do not move them forward.

Do not let your back arch or bend forward.

Do not let your head move forward. Repeat 10 times.

Overhead Presses

Lift both arms so that your elbows are bent and shoulder-high with your hands up toward the ceiling. Keep your elbows as far back and shoulders as far down as they comfortably go, and your neck relaxed.

Exhale as you reach your hands up toward the ceiling until fully extended.

Return slowly back to your starting position, keeping your elbows back and shoulders down.

Stretch Gently

Stretching can help you feel more relaxed, reduce muscle and joint pain, improve your blood flow, and maintain better posture. For best results, follow these tips:

- Try to do gentle movements, such as the exercises described above for five minutes before stretching to warm up.
- Be sure to move into and out of each stretch slowly.
- Go only until you feel the stretch. If the stretch feels more than mild to moderate, you have gone too far and are increasing your risk for injury.
- Be sure to relax.
- Breathe deeply and evenly while stretching; do not hold your breath.

It's important to move and stretch at your desk and to keep moving throughout the day.