



The Desk Work Out

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Photodisc file

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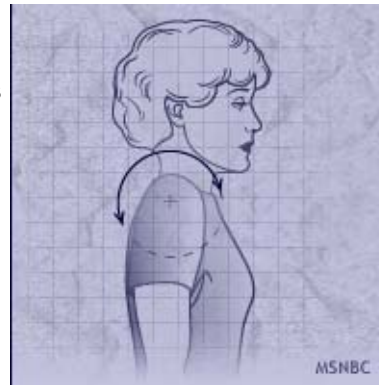
Neck stretch

Sitting tall in the chair with the neck relaxed, gently tilt the head to each side, then front and back, holding each position for a count of 10.



Shoulder rolls

With your shoulders relaxed and your arms hanging loose at your sides, roll your shoulders up and forward, then back to center. Next, roll your shoulders up and back, then again to your side. Repeat 5 times.



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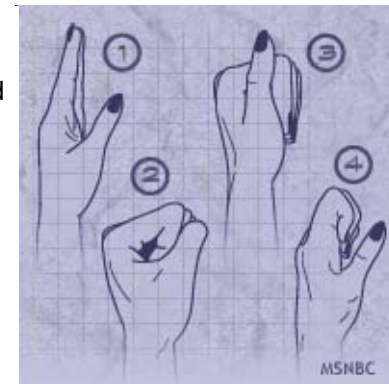
Your colleagues might look at you strangely, but stretching at your desk may make the daily grind less painful, experts say.

Forearm stretch

Position your right arm straight in front of you with your palm facing outward and your fingers pointing down. Using the left hand, gently pull the palm toward you and hold for a count of 10. Next, raise your hand so that your palm is facing away from your body and your fingers are pointing toward the ceiling. With the left hand, gently pull the right hand toward your body and hold for a count of 10. Repeat with the left arm.

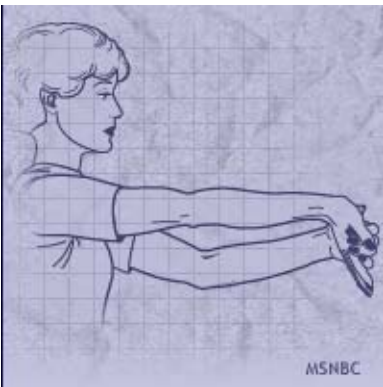
Tendon glides

Start with one hand pointing toward the ceiling. Make a fist. Then touch your fingertips to the base of your palm, keeping the thumb straight. Next, make a hook with your fingers, and then straighten them out again. Repeat 5 times.



Finger pulls

Grasp each finger at its base and very gently pull it in the opposite direction. Hold each for a count of 5.



START THE DAY off with five minutes of simple stretching exercises before beginning work.

It's basically to get your body systems warmed up and supple — just as you would if you were getting ready for a sporting event. The key is to start with a simple body stretch, like some jumping jacks or stretching the arms up over head and down by the sides.

Then focus in on specific areas with exercises like shoulder rolls, small arm circles and gentle wrist flexes.

Throughout the day, take at least one more stretch break. The basic concept is that your muscles tend to get tight and cold, and you want to loosen them up.

There are several exercises you can do right at your desk to stretch out your neck, arms, fingers and other areas. Resist the urge to shake out your hands, since sharp, whip-like actions can be unsafe.

In between stretch breaks, be sure to get up from your desk at least once an hour and walk around.

Take five minutes and do something that's not tied to the computer, such as picking up your mail, making copies, checking the fax, getting a drink or talking rather than e-mailing a colleague — Something that makes you get out of your static, sitting posture.

The biggest mistake is when people get focused on a project and just burn on it until it's done.

As a reminder, consider using an alarm or software program that alerts you when it's time to rest.

People who keep their eyes glued to the screen for extended periods without appropriate breaks may be at increased risk for repetitive stress injuries.

Chest stretch

Find an uncluttered corner in your office or cubicle. Stand about a foot away from the walls, facing the corner. Raise your elbows until they are level with your shoulders and then place both forearms directly on the walls. Next, keeping the body in alignment, lean into the corner and hold for 10 seconds. You should feel a good stretch across the pectoral muscles in your



Ergo-Robics

Office work may not exactly be strenuous but it can take a toll on the body nonetheless.

Typing for long hours can stress the hands and arms, and sitting in a static posture for extended periods may lead to cramped muscles and pinched nerves.

That's why many occupational health professionals advise warming up before work and performing stretches and exercises throughout the day.



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