

The Office Workout

This is the second in a three-part series on office ergonomics.

Stiff neck, tight shoulders and aching back? Working at a computer shouldn't be uncomfortable. Good posture and simple exercises, like those illustrated below, can help you from getting stiff, sore and tired. Make yourself comfortable. We guarantee you'll really notice the difference.

Exercises help to relax muscles, reduce stress and lessen the general fatigue that can set in when sitting and concentrating for long periods of time. The following exercises can be done during the day at your workstation. Perform the exercises when you feel the need. don't wait for a coffee break.

Do these exercises slowly and smoothly. Stretch and hold for a few seconds, then relax and repeat. All the exercises can be done in a comfortable five-minute routine. Remember not to hold your breath. Exhale as you bend or stretch.

Tall Stretch



Interlock fingers, palms up. Stretch arms above the head until they are straight. Do not arch the back.

Side Stretch



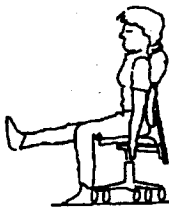
Drop left shoulder, reaching left hand towards the floor. Return to starting position. Repeat on right side.

Back Curl



Grasp shin, lift leg off the floor. Bend forward (curling the back), reaching nose toward the knee.

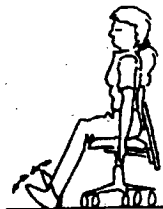
Ankle Flex and Stretch



Hold one foot off the floor, leg straight. Alternately, flex ankle (pointing toes up) and extend (pointing toes toward the floor).

Repeat with the other leg.

Toe-in, Toe-out



Place feet shoulder-width apart, heels on the floor. Swing toes in, then out.

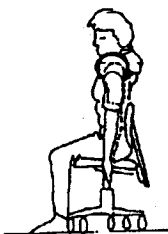
Leg lift



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, return it to the floor and repeat with the other leg.

Shoulder Roll



Roll the shoulders - raise them, pull them back, then drop them and relax. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Wrist Wrench



Put your palms together, so that your elbows are bent and your wrists are at right angles. Keeping your palms together, push your right palm and fingers against the left and bend the left wrist back.

Repeat to the other side.

Relax



Sit comfortably, hands crossed in your lap. Breathe slowly and deeply.