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The Home Doctor

The Woman at the Desk

By Dr. Leonard Keene Hirshberg, A.B., M.A., M.D., (Johns Hopkins University).

"I'm so tired," said a young newspaper woman to me one day. "I declare I don't know what is the matter with me-I never used to feel this way. I ache from head to foot, and I haven't the energy to do a

I looked at her in some surprise. Three months before, the last time I had seen her, she had been in excellent health ruddy cheeks, firm erect carriage, and an air of vitality and youth that was contagious. Now her color was gone; she looked anemic, pale, and her body was lax and inert in a way that spoke more eloquently than her words.

You're discouraged," I hazarded. Her eyes flashed an indignant denial. You've worked too hard, then?' "No-not as much in fact. I've been

mostly at my desk lately-I began to see light.
"Just how do you sit?" I questioned.
"Sit? Why, I don't know—any way at all."

There it was—the secret of her persist-ent weariness. "I sit any way at all." Shoulders bent, knees crossed, head lowered and strained forward—the same position that is accountable for the majorty of the ills of the working woman.

Not only does the woman who is chronically tired lose all of her good looks, youth and health, but she foregoes what is, perhaps, of much greater importance to her—her personal vigor, force, aggressiveness and will power. Associated with this lack of will power, there soon appears hesitation, indecision, a marked irritability and timidity. The tired woman is a cross woman, and moreover she will soon become an inefficient one. No mind can maintain its constant excellency of thought and activity unless it is given every possible aid and help of a perfect body. If the body be ill, so is the mind, and vice be "efficient" must have, in addition to the ability, health, strength, and endurance. No man will employ a worker who is not always "on the job" and is bright, ready and at the topnotch of readiness and vitality. Why? Because the work bears undeniable tell-tale marks of mental or bodily weariness

Oh, health! health! the blessing of the rich! the riches of the poor! Who can buy thee at too dear a rate, since there can be no enjoying the world without thee." So said an old and wise writer, and we are mechanism of our bodies until we are forced to do without a part of them. Then and then only, we realize all that we have missed.

In the matter of the health of a working woman, she is likely to spend eight hours of her day bending over a desk, a correct position is of the utmost importance, as well as other things. The chair should be of such a height that she may set her feet firmly and easily on the floor, the seat being deep enough from before backward to accommodate about three quarters of the length of the thighs, while the back of the chair should be so curved as to support the back in its natural curves, rests being afforded at the waist and shoulders.

The chair and desk should be close enough together to enable the worker to read from books in an erect position, since bending forward over the desk causes round shoulders, flat chest, and shortsightedness. When properly arranged, two-thirds of the forearm can be rested upon the desk without raising the shoulders. The book should be held about twelve inches from the eye, and always brought toward the face, instead of the

eyes peering forward to it.

If a woman has any large amount of writing to do, she should use a typewriter, by all means. This saves an immense amount of labor, allows the output of more work in a more legible and neater manner. Moreover, the motion of the fingers is not nearly as confining and cramping as when a pen is used, and the body is held more erect, with the shoulders well

It is a wise thing, when the muscles of the body feel confined and tired, to walk were double the price it would be a cheap around the room several times, and to liniment.

take a few deep breaths before an open window. This relaxes the strain of the eye as well as of the body.

An incorrect posture for any length of time results in many evils—main among which are a poor chest development, a deviation of the septum of the nose to one side (brought about by faulty breathing), marked curvature of the spine, and countless deformities of the chest. An erect position is absolutely essential for symmetrical development of the chest, and the proper ventilation of the lungs. Weak muscles and poor muscular developmentwhich are certain to come about—are fruitful sources of spinal curvatures and flat chests. Women write to me constantly asking, "What shall I do for a poorly developed bust?" And if they only knew it, there would be no need for this question, if they would only throw their shoulders back and their heads up and take a normal amount of exercise

Breathing exercises will go a long way toward correcting the ailments which arise from incorrect carriage. Taken before an open window, they completely change the air in the lungs, maintain the elasticity of the lung tissue, and expand the chest in every direction. A supply of change the air in the lungs, maintain the elasticity of the lung tissue, and expand the chest in every direction. A supply of oxygen is inhaled which stirs up, disinfects and cools the stagnant air.

To be most effective, these exercises should be taken before an open window, with loose and light clothing, supported from the shoulders. Place the hands on the hips, raise the shoulders to the utmost, and take a deep breath, breathing in from above downward. When the lungs have expanded to their utmost and have reached their greatest capacity, and the breath has been held as long as possible, empty the lungs by an abrupt and forced expiration. Repeat at first about ten times, and gradually increase, until the number has reached thirty. These should be practiced The business woman of to-day to early in the morning directly after arising, and in the evening just before retiring, as well as during the day.

The lunch hour should be devoted to absolute relaxation of some naturewhether it be rest, exercise or merely change of occupation. It is best to vary the monotony as much as possible, even during the working hours. Lunch should consist of a simple wholesome, nourishing meal—not cakes, pies, buns, pickles and ice cream. Altogether too many women breakfast on nothing, lunch on a concocrapidly learning to know it too, although, with most of us, we never appreciate the with most of us, we never appreciate the ache all the afternoon. A glass of milk, tion of sweets that outrage their digestive sandwiches and something warm make a satisfying and needed repast. Eat slowly, chew well. Following luncheon should come a brisk walk in the open air, which refreshes and revigorates the entire body.

It is absolutely necessary that some exercise be indulged in every day, whether it be a walk to and from the office, a stroll at the lunch hour or in the evening. Exercise deepens and quickens respiration, oxygenates the lungs, strengthens the muscles, and stirs up a sluggish liver. Many a person has thrown off a heavy cold, avoid nameless ills, and keep out the germs of tuberculosis, to which office workers are constantly exposed. With plenty of proper exercise, it is most unlikely that one will easily become sick, and a lack of outdoor exercise is certain to result in an anemic condition, pallor, flabby muscles, bad color, poor carriage, lack-lustre eyes, pale lips and a generally ill-nourished appearance.

"Ah! What avail the largest gifts of Heaven,

When drooping health and spirits go amiss?

How tasteless then whatever can be given Health is the vital principal of bliss, And exercise of health!"

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