

# TEN TIPS FOR CREATING AN ERGONOMIC WORKSTATION

Have you heard that you're supposed to have an ergonomic workstation when using your computer for long periods of time but have no idea how to implement such a thing? These ten tips will introduce you to ergonomics and help you assess your computer workstation at work and at home.

- Maintain proper posture, paying careful attention to positioning of head, neck/spine, arms/wrists, hips/thighs and feet.
- Alternate between different postures on a regular basis.
- When keyboarding, use minimum force while striking the keys.
- Keep a neutral position, where the forearms, wrists and hands are in a straight line.
- Avoid awkward reaching for work tools such as telephone, mouse and reference materials.
- Avoid resting elbows, forearms or wrists on hard surfaces or sharp edges.
- Take frequent mini-breaks throughout the day to give muscles and joints a chance to rest and recover.
- Alternate between work activities which use different muscle groups to avoid overuse.
- Give eyes a break by closing them momentarily, gazing at a distant object and blinking frequently.
- Proper exercises are a complement to a complete office ergonomics program. Consult with a health care professional to select appropriate exercises.

## STRETCHING FOR HEALTH

Performing simple stretches throughout the workday increases circulation and flexibility, improves posture, and reduces tension and the chance of injury. Here are some stretches specifically designed for individuals who spend time sitting while working at a desk or on a computer.

### **To get the best results: Exercise and take short breaks frequently**

- You can do just a few of the following exercises anytime during the day. Try some of them before you get stiff and sore.
- Exercise is one of the best ways you can improve your posture.
- Include a variety of movements in your workday.
- It's important to take shorter (even 15 seconds) breaks more frequently rather than one longer break.
- Hold each stretch for five to ten seconds and repeat each exercise three to five times, or perform as directed in the accompanying instructions.
- To improve flexibility, strength and endurance, try holding each exercise a little longer or doing more repetitions.
- When stretching, you will feel a slight pull on the muscle. If this becomes mildly uncomfortable (especially if you feel radiating pain), ease off or stop the stretch.
- Remember, movement is necessary for health and comfort. Simply standing up and taking a deep breath each hour will improve your comfort and health.

**See your healthcare provider before exercising if you are experiencing any medical concerns. EXERCISE SHOULD NOT CAUSE PAIN!**

# STRETCHES FOR THE NECK

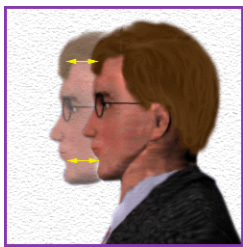
## Expected Results:

To improve neck, shoulder and upper back comfort.

### **Head Tilt and Turn (for head and neck)**

While sitting upright with shoulders relaxed slowly...

1. Lower head to shoulder, hold and repeat to other side.
2. Turn head to look over shoulder and repeat to other side.
3. Lower chin to chest and return to starting point.
4. Repeat sequence three to five times.



### **Neck Glide (for neck)**

While sitting comfortably upright and looking straight ahead...

1. Keep head and ears level, glide head back, as far as it will go.
2. Now glide head forward.
3. Repeat three times.

### **Shoulder and Arm Rolls (for neck, shoulders and upper back)**

While sitting or standing with shoulders relaxed, slowly...

1. Roll both shoulders backward, down and around in a circular motion.
2. Repeat three to five times.
3. Raise.
4. Rotate.
5. Lower.
6. Repeat.



### **STRETCH BREAK:**

Tuck your chin.

Tilt your head toward each shoulder.

Turn your head from side to side and look over your shoulder.

Keep your head aligned, **DO NOT** stick your neck out.

# STRETCHES FOR THE BACK

## Expected Results:

Reduce fatigue and improve back comfort.

### **Reverse the Curve (for back and hips)**

While standing upright with feet slightly apart...

1. Place palms in hollow of lower back.
2. Focus eyes on a point straight ahead (keeping chin down).
3. Bend backward using hands to support lower back (do not lock knees).
4. Hold for five to ten seconds and return to starting position.



5. Repeat three to five times.

### **Executive Stretch (for upper back, chest and shoulders)**

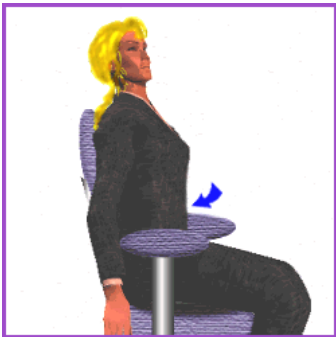
While sitting upright in chair...

1. Clasp hands behind head (elbows aligned with ears).
2. Press elbows back as far as possible and squeeze shoulder blades together.
3. Relax and repeat three times.



### **Pelvic Press (for abdominal muscle strength and back comfort)**

While sitting all the way back in chair...



1. Tighten/contract abdominal muscles (when you do this you will feel as if you are pulling your belly button toward the backrest of the chair)
2. Hold this position for five seconds.
3. Relax and repeat three times.

#### **STRETCH BREAK:**

##### **While sitting...**

Bend forward in your chair and *if able* touch hands to floor.

Grasp leg at shin, slowly pull leg up to your chest.

Repeat with other leg.

If you have knee pain, place hands **behind** thighs and slowly pull.

#### **While standing...**

Place hands on hips and bend backward.

## **STRETCHES FOR VISION**

### **Expected Results:**

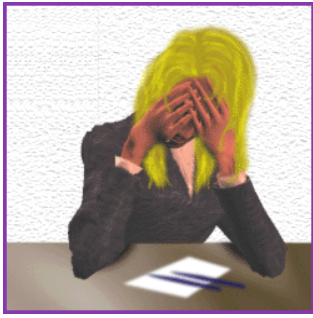
To reduce eyestrain, improve visual comfort and increase efficiency.

### **Focusing Technique (for eye relaxation)**

While sitting or standing...

1. Look out a window or as far away from work area as possible.
2. Focus on an object at least 20 feet away.
3. Then move your eyes around and look at other objects.
4. Look back at computer screen.
5. Repeat often throughout the workday.





### **Palming (for eye relaxation)**

While sitting in a chair with elbows resting on work surface....

1. Cup hands over eyes, palms resting on cheekbones (avoid applying pressure on your eyeballs).
2. Cross fingers over bridge of nose (shutting out light).
3. Close eyes for 15 seconds while breathing deeply.
4. Uncover eyes.

## **STRETCHES FOR THE SHOULDERS, ARMS, ETC.**

**For the hands:** Make a fist, then span or spread your fingers as far as possible.

**For the wrists:** Hold arms straight out in front of body bend your hands up and down.

**For the forearms:** Place palms together with fingers pointing toward ceiling. Keeping palms together, slowly lower hands until you feel a stretch.

**For the shoulders:** Shrug your shoulders, and then relax them. Roll your shoulders forward and backward. Gently shake your shoulders.

Pinch your shoulder blades together.

Reach over head and stretch, while stretching do side bends.

While sitting...

Sit up straight, place your hands behind your head, move your elbows backwards to pinch your shoulder blades together.

Stretch your arms behind your back.

**For the Upper Back and Upper Arms:** Interlace your fingers with palms facing away from your body, straighten your arms and lift them toward the ceiling.

**Do these as well...**

1. Get out of your chair and walk. **Our bodies were created to move and change positions.**
2. Alternate typing tasks with break jobs or alternate work tasks.
3. Reduce repetitions.
4. Take stretch breaks.

