

Desk exercises

We understand the demands of a busy work and home life, but you need not separate your work time and your exercise time. This factsheet will show you how to incorporate some simple exercises into your daily working routine to prevent pain, keep your joints healthy and your productivity high.

Problem - most of us have encountered spending a proportion of the day fidgeting to get comfortable at our workspace.

Solution - try to move and change posture regularly throughout the day. Setting reminders about posture breaks can also help.

Problem - long spells of computer work can cause fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache.

Solution - try to break up your tasks to allow changes in posture. Take breaks before fatigue hits, rather than to recover.

Problem - the rise in sedentary lifestyles is contributing to many health problems, including back pain, with 20% of people in Great Britain taking a walk "less than once a year or never" (Office for National Statistics).

Solution - staying active at work can help reduce the risk of you experiencing pain. Try to take a posture break every hour to help avoid the onset of symptoms.

Problem - static positioning can increase the risk of you experiencing pain symptoms.

Solution - completing simple stretching exercises is one way to combat this. These can be done whilst at your desk or combined with another task, for example whilst at the photocopier.

Tips

Drinking water regularly, apart from keeping you hydrated, helps to get you up and moving throughout the day. Keep a water bottle on your desk and fill it up regularly.

Simple changes in tasks, such as walking over to a colleague rather than emailing them can help you to get moving and change posture regularly.

Simple stretching exercises can assist in improving circulation, concentration, reducing fatigue and muscle tightness. Have a look at the exercises below which can be used to stretch the neck, back and upper limbs. If you have any pre-existing issues, please discuss these with a relevant medical professional before completing these exercises.

- 1 Stand beside a wall. Raise your arm to ninety degrees and put your arm on the wall with your elbow bent. Stretch the front of your shoulder by moving forward and turning your body the opposite way.



- 2 Sit tall. Lock your hands together at chin height and rotate your trunk.



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- 3 Place your hands on your back (thumbs pointing forwards). Arch your back then slump.



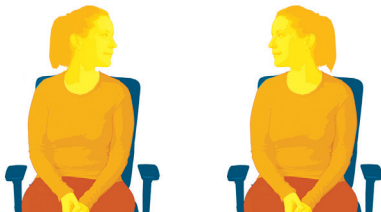
- 4 Squeeze your shoulder blades together.



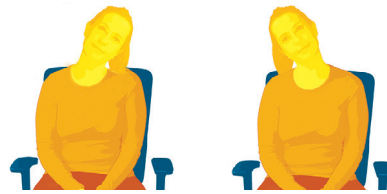
- 5 Tuck your chin in while stretching the crown of your head to the ceiling.



- 6 Look over your right shoulder as far as possible without moving your body. Repeat on the left.



- 7 Fix your eyes on an object in front of you. Bring your right ear to your right shoulder. Repeat on the left.



- 8 Circle your shoulders backwards.



- 9 With your palms up, lift your arms out sideways to reach overhead while taking a deep breath in. If space is insufficient, bend your elbows.



- Repeat these at regular intervals during the day, holding stretches for five to ten seconds and repeating the exercises five to six times
- You don't have to do all of these at once, but aim to have done them all by the end of the day