

The Office Worker's Guide to

STRETCHING

Sitting in front of a desk all day, every day can wreak havoc on your body, especially since most of us don't have the best posture. Hunching the shoulders and slumping in your seat can cause unnecessary back pain, neck pain, headaches, tension and tightness.

Performing the following stretches throughout the day can help to increase flexibility and reduce tension and stress. The best thing? There's no need for special equipment, and all the stretches can be done at your desk!



Chest Stretch

Stretching the chest is one of the best exercises you can do for your body, as most of us spend much of our time hunched forward. Instead of a band, use a piece of string or even a broomstick.

How to do it: In a seated or standing position, hold the band in a wide grip over the head. Take the arms back just a bit as you lower them down, stretching the chest. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Avoid this if you have shoulder problems.



Shoulder Shrugs

The shoulders and neck hold a lot of stress and tension from typing, clicking and leaning. These shrugs are a great way to release tension and promote circulation.

How to do it: Seated or standing, lift the shoulders up towards the ears, squeezing them as hard as you can. Hold for 1-2 seconds and roll them back as you relax down. Repeat for 8-10 reps.



Upper Back Stretch

The upper back can easily become tense and tight from hunched shoulders, especially if you hold the phone against your shoulder or use your mouse a lot. This exercise will quickly dispel any tension.

How to do it: Seated or standing, stretch the arms straight out and rotate the hands so that the palms face away from each other. Cross the arms so that the palms are pressed together, contract the abs and round the back, reaching away as you relax the head. Don't collapse but instead imagine you're curving up and over an imaginary ball. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. If twisting the arms doesn't feel good, simply lace the fingers together.



Spinal Twist

Sitting for long periods of time can affect the lower back, leaving it tight and achy. This stretch will help gently work out some of the tension. Only perform this stretch gently.

How to do it: In a seated position with the feet flat on the floor, contract the abs and gently twist the torso towards the right, using your hands to help deepen the stretch. Only twist as far as you comfortably can and keep the back straight while keeping the hips square. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.





Torso Stretch

Sitting in a hunched position can, and will, make your back ache. This simple move will stretch all the muscles in your back, sides and arms.

How to do it: Seated or standing, lace the fingers together and stretch them up towards the ceiling. Take a deep breath as you stretch up as high as you can, then exhale and open the arms, sweeping them back down. Repeat for 8-10 reps.



Forearm Stretch

Your forearms can quickly become tight and sore from typing. Allowing them to stay tight can lead to injury. Stretching them out can help relieve the muscles in the forearms and wrists.

How to do it: Seated or standing, stretch the right arm out and turn the hand down so that the fingers point towards the floor. Use the left hand to gently pull the fingers toward you, feeling a stretch in the forearm. Hold for 10-30 second and repeat on the other hand.



Neck Stretch

Holding tension in the neck can lead to headaches and upper back tension as well. Many of us drop the head forward when working on the computer, which can put extra stress on the neck muscles. This stretch feels great on the neck and shoulders.

How to do it: Sitting the chair, reach down and grab the side of the chair with the right hand and gently pull while tilting your head to the left, feeling a stretch down the right side of the neck and shoulder. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.



Hip Flexor Stretch

The lower body also gets tight from sitting too much, especially the front of the hips. When you sit, the glutes stretch while the hip flexors get tighter. Stretching this area several times a day can help reduce that tightness.

How to do it: While standing, take the right leg back as though you're going to do a lunge. Squeeze the glutes as you bend the knees, lowering down until you feel a stretch in the front of the right hip. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.



Seated Hip Stretch

The Seated Hip Stretch helps open up the hips and stretch the complex series of muscles in the hips and glutes.

How to do it: While seated, cross the right ankle over the left knee and sit up nice and tall. Gently lean forward, keeping the backs straight and reaching out with the torso until you feel a stretch in the right glute and hip. You can also press down on the right knee to deepen the stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.



Inner Thigh Stretch

This stretch feels great on the inner thighs, hips and groin, and is another hip-opening move that may get rid of tension and stress in the lower body.

How to do it: While seated, take the legs wide, toes out and lean forward with the elbows on the thighs. Keep the back straight and the abs contracted. Gently press forward while using the elbows to push the thighs out until you feel a stretch in the inner thighs. Hold for 10-30 seconds.

