



MHealthy Physical Activity: STRETCHING AT WORK



It is helpful to stretch frequently during the workday. By performing the following stretches, you can help relax muscle tension and tightness. In addition, these stretches will help promote better circulation.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Relax into the stretch
- Start in 'neutral' posture (sit or stand tall with belly button in towards the spine)
- Concentrate on breathing slowly

- Stretch until you feel a slight discomfort (not pain) in the muscle
- Don't bounce
- Hold stretch for at least 15-30 seconds
- Repeat stretch one or more times

If you have had recent surgery, muscle, or joint problems, please consult with your personal health care professional before starting a stretching program.

HANDS

Separate and straighten your fingers until tension of a stretch is felt (fig. 1). Relax, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for 10 seconds (fig. 2). Repeat stretch in fig. 1 once more.

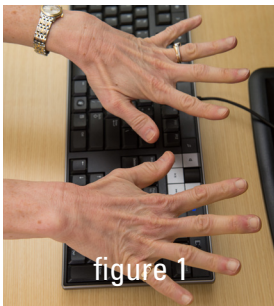


figure 1

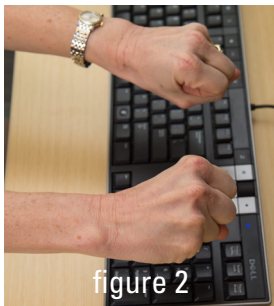


figure 2

SHOULDERS

Roll the shoulders down and back, starting with small circles and working up to larger circles. Do 10 circles backwards and then repeat forward circles.



NECK

Slowly let the head tilt toward one shoulder. Repeat toward other shoulder. Relax muscles on both sides of the neck. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.

NECK

Slowly turn head and eyes to look over one shoulder. Repeat toward other shoulder. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.



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ARMS

With fingers interlaced and palms out, straighten arms in front of you until stretch is felt. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.



ARMS

Move hands over head until stretch is felt. Repeat 1-2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.



ARMS

Slowly pull elbow behind head until stretch is felt. Repeat with other elbow. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.



BACK

Sit with right leg bent over left leg and rest left hand on the outside of the upper thigh of the right leg. Now apply some controlled, steady pressure toward the left with your hand. As you do this, look over your right shoulder to get the stretch feeling. Repeat on the other side.



BACK

Standing with knees slightly bent, place your palms on lower back just above your hips, fingers pointing downward. Gently push your palms forward to create an extension in the lower back. Repeat twice. Use this stretch after sitting for an extended period of time.



LEGS

Keeping back leg straight, with heel on floor, lean into wall until a stretch is felt in calf. Repeat with other leg. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.



LEGS

With feet shoulder-width apart and pointing straight forward, and with knees bent, lower hands towards floor until stretch is felt. Bend knees further to return to standing position. Repeat 2 times, 1-2 sessions per day.

