

Sitting Exercises at Work

Take a Break (Without Leaving Your Desk!)

Sitting at your desk all day may get the work done, but it's not doing any favors for your health. If you're stuck in a cubicle most of the day, it's important to give your body—and your mind—a break.

A few stretches and simple exercises, easily done without leaving your desk, should do the trick. And your co-workers won't suspect a thing!

So take 10 or 15 minutes at various times of the day to practice these techniques. They'll leave you feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to tackle the next assignment.

Stretches and Relaxation

Sitting in one place without movement will fog your brain! Try these deep breathing and flexibility exercises to stimulate blood flow, relax muscles and relieve the tension that's accumulated in your body.

Deep Breathing

Sit at the edge of your chair, arms hanging at your side. Inhale deeply, raising your arms slowly over your head. Exhale, and lower your arms slowly back to your side. Repeat several times, allowing your body to relax as you do so.

Chair Twist

Sit on the edge of your chair, with your legs planted on the floor and your right hand positioned on the chair behind your back. Place your left hand on your right knee and gently twist to the right. Keep your head up and spine erect. Alternate to the other side.

Cat stretch

Sit on the edge of your chair with hands placed on your desk in front of you. Slowly curve your back until you are hunched forward with your head looking down at the floor. Then, slowly, arch your back until your head is looking at ceiling. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Arm Stretch

Raise both arms above your head, keeping your head straight. Gently stretch your right arm higher. Lower and stretch your left arm higher. Repeat 10 times, alternating side stretches.

Joint Flexibility

If you're stuck in front of a monitor, on a phone, or even reading through reports all day, your body will store tension in various parts of your body. If you've ever had a stiff neck or aching back at the end of the day, you know what we're talking about. Keep tension at bay with these easy tips.

Neck Tilts

Sit straight and face forward. Slowly tilt your head forward, chin toward your chest, then backward, eyes looking at ceiling. Repeat 3-4 times.

Neck Twists

Hold head erect staring straight in front of you. Turn your head to look over your right shoulder. Return to the forward facing position, then turn your head to look over your left shoulder. Repeat 3-4 times.

Ear to Shoulder Neck Stretch

Hold head erect staring straight in front of you. Remain facing forward and tilt head to the right, ear moving to the shoulder. Straighten to the original position and repeat on the left side. Repeat 3-4 times.

Shoulder Rolls

Relax your shoulders. Slowly lift and rotate your shoulders forward ten times. Reverse the rotation and repeat ten times.

Wrist Rotations

Arms should be hanging straight by your side. Starting with your right wrist, rotate your wrist clockwise 10 times, reverse, and rotate counter clockwise 10 times. Repeat with the left wrist. This exercise can relieve the tension that may lead to carpal syndrome.

Arm Rotations

Lift arms to shoulder height and hold. Begin rotating your arms forward. Repeat ten rotations. Reverse to rotate your arms backward. Complete ten rotations each way.

Ankle Rotations

Sitting at the edge of your chair, extend your right leg in front of you. Rotate your ankle clockwise 10 times, reverse, and rotate counter clockwise 10 times. Repeat with the left ankle.

Muscle Group Exercises

Let's be honest. None of us wants to succumb to that "office spread" that seems to creep up on us no matter how many break room doughnuts we resist. Keep muscles toned with these easy to do desk exercises.

Abdominal Contractions

Sit straight in your chair. Contract your stomach and hold for 5 seconds. Relax and breathe. Complete a set of 10.

Buttock Crunch

Sit straight in your chair, feet flat on the floor. Squeeze your buttocks together and hold for 5 seconds. Release. Complete a set of 10.

Single Leg Lifts

Sit on the edge of your chair with feet planted on the ground in front of you. Lift your right leg and straighten it in front of you. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Switch legs and repeat.

Repeat this exercise and instead of holding, rotate your leg from the thigh, 10 times clockwise, 10 times counter clockwise. Repeat with both legs.

Calf Lifts

Plant your feet on the ground in front of you. Without standing, raise your feet onto your toes. Lower them back down until your heel is again touching the ground. Repeat 10 times.

A Couple More Things...**Take a Walk**

We're all entitled to a break once in while. Even if you lunch at your desk, take 5 to 10 minutes to walk around the office building, up and down a flight of stairs, or even around the cubicle block. You'll be surprised how much a short walk can clear the brain.

Give your eyes a rest!

This is important. Staring at a computer monitor all day is fatiguing and stressful on your eyes. Optometrists recommend giving your eyes a break every 20 minutes. So if you realize you've been staring at the screen too long, consciously look out a window at a far off object, or even a picture on your cubicle wall. Anything that allows your eyes to focus on something more distant will benefit your eye health.