

Office

Stretch your comfort level

with simple workstation exercises

Just as athletes need to warm up before competition, office workers need to warm up to meet the physical demands of their jobs. Stretching exercises warm up muscles and improve muscle elasticity.

General guidelines

Simple stretching exercises will help keep you comfortable at work. Follow these general guidelines:

- **Breathe while exercising.** Don't hold your breath.
- **Stretch gently.** Avoid jerky movements.
- **Go easy at first.** Start with a few exercises and gradually increase.
- **Exercise regularly.** Develop a pattern of exercising various parts of your body at regular intervals throughout your workday – before discomfort occurs. (See Sample Exercise Schedule at right)
- **Discontinue if pain occurs.** Pain and discomfort after you exercise may indicate that you did too much. Check with a medical professional when in doubt.

Fit exercise into your workday

Having a plan will help you remember to exercise. Here's a sample schedule that you can follow, or select your own combination of these exercises and adjust the schedule to fit your workday.

Sample exercise schedule

Time	Exercise	Minutes
8 a.m.	Head turn Arms, shoulders and rib cage Shoulders, back and hips	2 - 3
10 a.m.	Shoulder circles Wrists Legs	2 - 3
12 p.m.	Eye circles Hands and fingers Leg raise	2 - 3
2 p.m.	Eye cover Shoulder circles Shoulders, back and hips	2 - 3
4 p.m.	Head turn Arms, shoulders and rib cage Legs	2 - 3



Head turn

- Start with your head facing forward.
- Turn your head slowly to one side as far as comfortable.
- Then turn to the other side.
- Repeat 5 times.



Shoulder circles

- Slowly move your shoulders in a circular motion: upward, forward, downward, and backward for forward circles.
- Reverse the direction for backward circles.
- Repeat 5 times each direction.



Eye circles

- With your head steady, roll your eyes clockwise in a circular motion.
- Reverse the direction and roll your eyes counter-clockwise in a circular motion.
- Repeat, alternating direction, 5 times each direction.



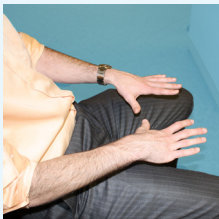
Eye Cover

- Cover one eye with a cupped palm and focus on the palm of your hand.
- Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat with other eye, 5 times each eye.



Hands and fingers

- With your arms in a comfortable position, make a fist and hold for 2 or 3 seconds.
- Stretch your fingers out and hold for 2 or 3 seconds.
- Repeat, alternating hands, 5 times each hand.



Wrists

- With your forearm in a comfortable horizontal position and your palm toward the floor, bend your wrist down.
- Then raise your hand, extending your wrist.
- Repeat 5 times.



Arms, shoulders and rib cage

- Interlace your fingers.
- With your palms facing upward above your head, press your hands upward, stretching your arms.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times.

Variation: Press hands forward at shoulder level.



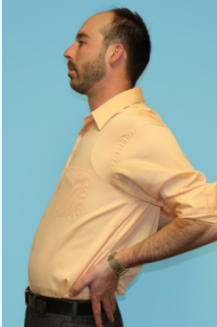
Legs*

- Using both hands, grasp one shin.
- Pull your leg slowly up toward your chest. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Lower your leg.
- Repeat, alternating right and left legs, 5 reps each leg.



Leg raise*

- In a seated position, use your hands on armrests or seat to maintain balance.
- Slowly straighten your knee, extending your right foot in front of you.
- Slowly bring your foot back to original position.
- Repeat, alternating right and left legs, 5 reps each leg.



Shoulders, back and hips

- Place your palms on your lower back in a standing or sitting position.
- Leaning your shoulders back, stretch your upper body backwards. Hold this position for 5 seconds.
- Return to a neutral position. Repeat 5 times.

* Use caution when performing leg exercises. Maintain balance by performing exercises in a seated position, or while standing and holding onto a stable surface.

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