

Stretching

Why is stretching important?

No matter how well a workstation is designed, problems may arise if attention is not paid to the way the work is done. Working at a computer often involves very few changes in body position. This lack of movement can lead to muscle pain and strain.

What can be done to minimize this strain?

It is recommended that a person break for 5-10 minutes for every hour spent at a workstation.

- Vary the work tasks. Break up keyboarding tasks work by doing other job duties or tasks that involve moving around or changing body position. Try to stand up and move around.
- Look away from the screen occasionally and focus your eyes on an object far away.
- Take regular rest breaks to ease muscle aches, eye strain and stress.
- Relax your muscles, stretch and change position.

What are some stretches for the hands and forearms that can be done at the workstation? 1. a) Start with your hand open.



b) Make a fist. Keep your thumb straight, not tucked under your fingers.



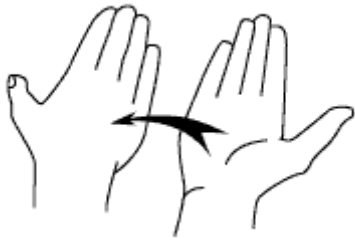
c) Slide your finger tips up your palm so the tips of your fingers are near the base of you fingers and you should feel a stretch. Do not force your fingers with your other hand if something is painful.



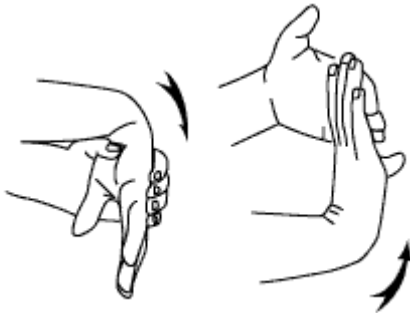
2. With your hand open and facing down, gently bend wrist from side to side, as far as possible. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



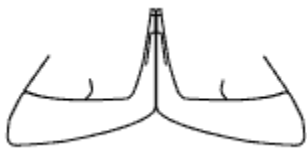
3. Start by stretching your arm and hand out and slowly rotate the wrist down until you feel a stretch. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Next, rotate the palm up until you feel a stretch. Repeat 3 times.



4. Grasp your hand and hold your fingers with the other hand. Slowly bend your wrist down until you feel a stretch. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times. Then slowly bend your wrist up until you feel the stretch. Hold and relax as above.



5. Sitting with your elbows on the table and palms together, slowly lower wrists to the table until you feel a stretch (your elbows will move outward a bit). Be sure to keep your palms together throughout the stretch. Hold 5 to 7 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times.



What are some stretches for the neck and shoulders?

1. Shoulder Shrug: The purpose of the shoulder shrug is to relieve early symptoms of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.

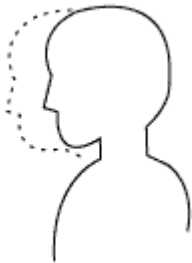
- Raise the top of your shoulders towards your ears until you feel slight tension in

your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3 to 5 seconds. Then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2 or 3 times.



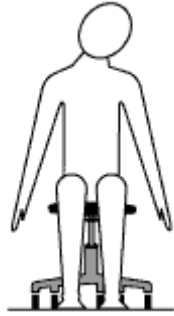
2. Head Glide: The head glide helps to stretch your chest, neck and shoulder muscles.

- Sit or stand upright. Without lifting your chin, glide your head straight back. You know you are doing this exercise right if it gives you the feeling of a double chin. Hold for 20 counts and repeat 5 to 10 times.



3. Neck Relaxer: This exercise helps to relax the neck.

- Drop your head slowly to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat on the right side. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, turn your head all the way to the left, then turn all the way to the right.



4. Shoulder Roll: This exercise will help relax the shoulder muscles.

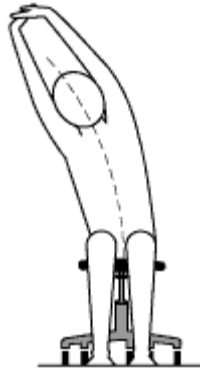
- Slowly roll your shoulders backward five times in a circular motion. Next, roll your shoulders forwards.



What are some stretches for the back, side and legs?

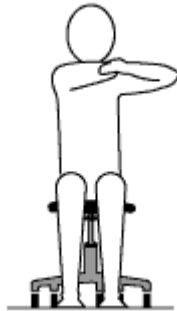
1. Back / Side Stretch:

- Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keeping the elbows straight. Press arms as far back as you can. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right.



2. Middle / Upper Back Stretch:

- Hold your right arm with your left hand just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow toward your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat with your left arm.



3. Back Curl (will also stretch your legs):

- Grasp your shin. Lift the leg off the floor. Bend forward (curling your back), and reach your nose to your knee. Repeat with the other leg.



4. Ankle Flex and Stretch:

- Hold one foot off the floor with your leg straight. Alternately flex your ankle (point your toes up) and extend (point your toes down). Repeat with the other leg.



5. Leg Lift:

- Sit forward on the chair so that your back is not touching the chair's back. Place feet flat on the floor. With a straight leg, lift one foot a few inches off the floor. Hold momentarily, and return your foot to the floor. Repeat with the other leg.



From: "[Office Ergonomics Safety Guide](#), 4th Edition" by CCOHS, 2001.

Credit: Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety