

Stretches for the Office

Stretching Tips:

- Aim to change postures between sitting and standing every 20-30 minutes
- Aim to perform 2-4 different stretches during each standing break
- Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds
- You may cycle through all of these stretches during the day
- Or you may choose stretches that target areas in need
- Begin gently and do not overstretch

CAUTION:

These tips and the following stretches are not intended for treatment and should NOT be performed without first consulting your doctor if you have any medical, spinal, bone or joint conditions or risk factors that could be adversely affected by stretching (such as Osteoporosis/Osteopenia). Never stretch beyond a comfortable level.

Back Extension:

- Hands on hips keeping your gaze forward
- Press your hips forward gently to tolerance
- Return to neutral spinal position
- May be performed with a wall behind you for balance



Hamstring Stretch:

- Extend one leg forward, knee straight, heel on ground
- Keep toes pointed up, hands on hips
- Push buttocks backward, keeping back straight
- Squat down slightly with opposite leg
- Hinge forward slightly, keeping chest up, until a stretch is felt in the back of the leg
- Hold and repeat on opposite leg



Standing or Sitting Pectoral Stretch:

- Hands behind head, elbows out to the side
- Keep the spine and neck straight; sit up tall
- Lightly squeeze shoulder blades together and hold



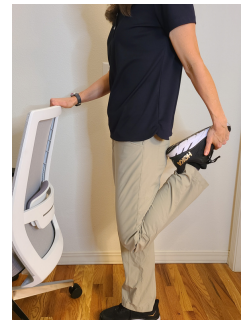
Neck Stretch:

- Seated or standing, rest one hand in the small of your back
- Rotate your head away from that arm and down towards your shoulder until a stretch is felt on the side of the neck
- Let gravity gently stretch your neck without forcing it



Standing Quad Stretch:

- Use your chair or a wall for balance
- Stand on one leg while pulling the opposite heel toward your backside until you feel a stretch in the front of the thigh



Rhomboid/Shoulder Stretch:

- Clasp hands together and extend arms out directly in front of you
- Reach forward until you feel a stretch between your shoulder blades
- You may also rotate slightly side to side to get more of a stretch on one side or the other (*do not rotate if you have osteoporosis, osteopenia or a spinal condition in that area*)



Half Moon Stretch:

- Stand with feet together, hands clasped overhead
- Stretch upward toward the ceiling to elongate your spine and hold
- Then slowly bend to one side until you feel a stretch and hold
- Repeat on the opposite side
- *Do not perform side stretches if you have osteoporosis, osteopenia or a spinal condition in that area*



Wrist Flexor Stretch:

- Use one hand to **GENTLY** stretch wrist and fingers backward on the opposite side
- Keep elbow straight and hold stretch
- *Be sure NOT to overstretch*



Active Stretching/Warm-Ups

What is Active Stretching?:

Active stretching is a slightly more vigorous activity that promotes:

- Joint range of motion/repetitive stretching
- Circulation of blood and lymphatic fluid
- Breathing and slightly elevated heart rate (light exercise)
- Warming up for mental alertness especially after lunch or in the afternoon

Studies have found that those with a higher intensity level of physical activities during breaks had significantly lower muscle fatigue in the shoulders and low back muscles and foot swelling compared to those who mostly perform static sitting and standing at their desk.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00140139.2017.1353139?journalCode=terg20&>

The same exercise and dynamic movements are also important for improving mental performance and memory.

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Hip Swings Forward/Backward: 10-15 times each hip

- Hold onto a chair for balance; make sure you have leg clearance, other hand on hip
- Swing one hip forward and backward to the end ranges
- A comfortable stretch should be felt both directions
- Keep your core muscles tight and back straight



Hip Swings Side to Side: 10-15 times each hip

- Hold onto a chair for balance; make sure you have leg clearance, other hand on hip
- Swing one hip side to side to stretch the inner and outer thighs
- Keep core muscles tight and trunk bent slightly forward
- Avoid side to side trunk motion



Hip Rotations: 10-15 times each hip

- Hold onto chair for balance with one hand, other hand on hip
- Lift one knee and hip up to 90 degrees of bend (1)
- Rotate hip out to the side at 90 degrees of bend (2)
- Lower leg back to starting position, foot on floor (3)
- Repeat



Toe Rises: 10-15 times

- Hold onto a chair for balance
- Rise up on both toes and lower, repeat
- For a greater challenge, rise up on one foot at a time



Fanny Kicks: 10-15 times each side

- Hands on hips
- Kick your right heel toward your right fanny
- Kick your left heel toward your left fanny
- Continue alternating legs
- This requires a slight weight shift side to side each time



Shoulder Rolls: 10-15 times each direction

- Gently roll shoulders upward and backward
- Squeeze shoulder blades gently each time
- Relax shoulders downward
- Repeat 10-15 times and change directions
- Gently roll shoulders upward and forward
- Relax shoulders downward
- Repeat 10-15 times



Arm/Shoulder Swings: 10-15 times

- Swing both arms across the chest
- Then swing arms backward, allowing the chest to open and stretch
- Continue backward and forward in a rhythmic motion 10-15 times



Knee to Elbow: 10-15 times each direction

- Touch your elbow to the opposite knee
- Repeat with the opposite elbow and knee
- Continue alternating for 10-15 repetitions
- Keep your core muscles tight and allow them to contract each time the knee and elbow touch



Chair Squats: 10-15 times

- For safety, place the back of your chair against a wall
- Stand slightly in front of your chair seat
- Arms out straight, back straight and core tight
- Push the hips backward as you squat down
- Just touch the chair seat without sitting
- Return to standing position and repeat
- Make sure to keep the chest up

