Office Stretches

Getting up and walking around is the best exercise you can get to provide a break from sitting, concentrating and using the muscles of the arms and hands.

About every 20 to 30 minutes is a guide to how often it is helpful to move around. Take 2-3 microbreaks of 30-60 seconds every hour.

Regularly change your posture and give muscles a chance to recover.

Stop, s-t-r-e-t-c-h and check!

- [ ] Do a few of these exercises a few times every day.
- [ ] Dots show the muscles that you are exercising.
- [ ] Make sure you relax and perform them gently.
- [ ] Hold the stretch or repeat as indicated.
- [ ] Do not over-stretch.
- [ ] Stop if you feel discomfort.
- [ ] Remember to do each side.

Neck

Diagram 1: Head rolls

Keeping your chin tucked in, gently lower ear to shoulder and hold for 10 seconds on either side. Repeat several times and be careful not to extend your neck back too far.
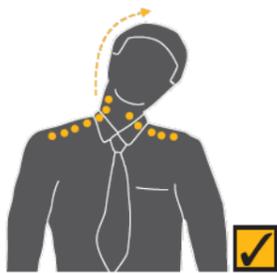
Diagram 2: Head turns

Turn head to look over left shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Turn head the other way and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat several times.

Diagram 3: Chin tucks

Raise the head to straighten the neck. Tuck the chin in and upwards creating a double chin. This also results in a forward tilt of the head. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.
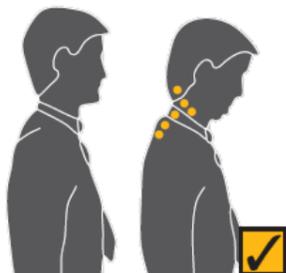
Check neck posture
- [ ] Position the top of your screen at eye level.
- [ ] Use a document holder directly beside or below the screen – it saves you looking down.

Shoulders

Diagram 4: Shoulder rolls

Circle shoulders forward several times, then backward. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

Check shoulder posture

- [ ] Relax your shoulders and rest your hands on your lap. Bend your elbows to no more than 90 degrees and check the height of your finger tips against your current work height. If the work (keyboard or desk) is higher than your hands you may be hunching your shoulders unnecessarily. If so, try and raise your chair height or lower your desk height and try and relax your shoulders while working.

Wrists, hands and arms

Diagram 5: Wrist and elbow stretch

Interlace fingers, palms outward, and straighten arms in front. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.

Diagram 6: Wrist stretch

Straighten your arm in front and bend your wrist forward, gently assist the stretch with your other hand. Hold for 10 seconds then stretch your wrist back and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with other arm.

Check hand and wrist posture

- [ ] Keep your fingers suspended over the keyboard.
- [ ] Keep elbows at keyboard level. This may mean adjusting the desk or chair height.
- [ ] Don't rest your wrists on the desk or keyboard. Keep hands suspended.

Upper and lower back

Diagram 7: Upper and lower back stretch

Interlace fingers and turn palms upward above head; straighten arms then slowly lean slightly from side to side. Repeat movement several times

Diagram 8: Back arching

Stand up. Support lower back with hands and gently arch back. Gently arch back and hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat as often as is needed.

Diagram 9: Pectoral stretch

Raise both arms to shoulder height and bend elbows. Pull both elbows back slowly to bring shoulder blades towards each other. Repeat several times.

Check back support
- [ ] Sit well back in your chair - if your feet need support, use a foot rest.
- [ ] Adjust the back rest on your chair to support your lower back.

Legs

Diagram 10: Foot pump

Stand up, holding the chair for balance if necessary, and alternately raise heels and toes. Repeat 10 times.

Check leg comfort

- [ ] If the seat of your chair is digging into the back of your thighs, check that it is not too high or whether it is tilted backwards.
- [ ] If the seat is too high lower the chair and desk or use a foot rest to support your feet.
- [ ] Also check the tilt of the seat and if necessary adjust it to a horizontal position.

Eyes

Diagram 11: Eye exercise

Sit up straight, face *forward* and repeat this sequence several times without moving head. Look up, then down. Look left, then right.
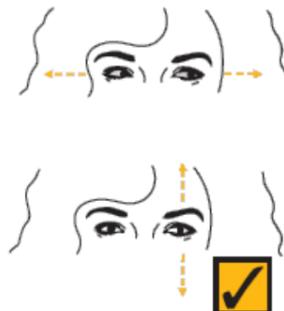
Diagram 12: Visual rest

Look up and away from screen Focus on a distant object (more than 3 meters). For example, look out of the window or at a picture on a far wall. Shift vision back to screen and refocus.

Check eye comfort

- [ ] Is there enough light falling on your documents?
- [ ] Do windows or light fittings cause glare or reflection on the screen? If so, try turning the screen or blocking the path of the light.
- [ ] Use a screen with a light background when working with text. Software with a light back-ground for text is more comfortable for the eyes.