

Exercise at The Office

For many busy office-bound employees, sitting all day can cause a host of problems: back pain, muscle tightness, headaches, musculoskeletal problems, weight gain, depression, tension and decreased motivation. Office exercise may relieve or prevent many of the above complaints.

At Your Desk

If you feel too desk-bound during the day to get up and move, you can still stretch, strengthen your muscles and engage in short cardiovascular sessions right in your chair.

Hands and Wrists

- a) Extend fingers from closed fist, then clench your fist again. Do twenty repetitions.
- b) Touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger in turn, making the circle as round as you can. Straighten your fingers in between, touching each other.

Neck

- a) Neck Push: Keeping your head upright, hold the palm of one hand against your forehead, and press your head forward, resisting with your palm. Hold ten to fifteen seconds. Now clasp your hands behind your head and press your head backwards, resisting with your hands. Hold for ten to fifteen seconds. Now hold your right hand against the side of your head, and press your head to the right, resisting with your hand again. Hold for ten to fifteen seconds. Then repeat on left side.
- b) Relax and Roll: Relax your shoulders and let your head roll forward, chin to chest. Slowly rotate your head in a circle without straining your neck. Repeat five times. Try not to raise your shoulders as you do the exercise.

Legs

- a) Sit On Air: Stand with your back against a wall, feet apart and about sixteen inches from the wall. Lower yourself into a seated position, keeping feet flat on the floor. Hold for fifteen to thirty seconds. Return to standing position and relax for thirty seconds. Repeat three times. Do not bend your knees beyond a ninety degree angle.
- b) Calf Raise: Stand on one leg. Raise your heel, then lower it to the floor. Perform twenty repetitions for each leg.

Feet

Foot Clenching: While sitting, alternate extending and clenching your toes. Perform twenty repetitions.

Upper back and shoulders

Shoulder Rotations: Draw circles with your shoulders, as big as possible. Inhale and expand ribcage as shoulders are moving back. Do ten

circles in one direction, then switch direction and do ten more.

Lower Back

- a) Spine Rotation: Sit with feet and hips planted solidly. Slowly turn your trunk clockwise and counterclockwise. Make sure your head moves with your torso. Perform for fifteen repetitions each side.
- b) Good Morning: Stand with your knees slightly bent and your arms akimbo. Keep your lower back arched. Bend at the waist. Do ten repetitions.

Buttocks

Sit in a chair or lie on your back with your knees bent. Tighten and squeeze your buttocks. Hold five to ten seconds and release. Repeat six to eight times. Really concentrate on the squeeze for maximum results.

Relieve/Prevent Several Complaints

Back and Upper Body

Tummy Twist: Stand with your feet shoulder wide apart. Hold your bent elbows down at your sides with fists up. Lean slightly forward and twist side to side with your elbows leading the movement. Repeat for thirty to forty five seconds. Do several times a day.

On the Job

1. Do the exercises in *At Your Desk* above.
2. Walk or bike to work if you can. If you take the bus or train, get off one stop earlier and walk.
3. Look for opportunities to stand. Eat lunch standing up.
4. Breaks: Take a brisk walk or short exercise period while at our desk.
5. If your job involves walking, do it faster.
6. Use the stairs whenever possible.

Climbing the stairs, running in place and taking brisk walks around the building are ways office employees can get their heart rates up.

References cited:

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Occupational Hazards, 10 January, 2008-Get in Shape at Your Desk

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Truman State U.-Exercises at Your Desk.

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