

Computer & Desk Stretches

Prolonged sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain. But, by taking a five or ten minute break to do a series of stretches, your whole body can feel better. It's also helpful to learn to stretch spontaneously, throughout the day, stretching any particular area of the body that feels tense for a minute or two. This will help greatly in reducing and controlling unwanted tension and pain.

HOW TO STRETCH

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-20

seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

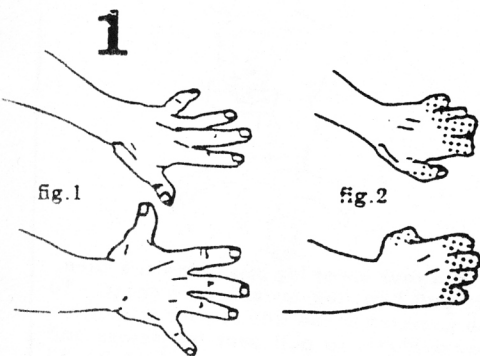
After holding the easy stretch, you can move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 10-15 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the same. If the tension increases or becomes painful, you are overstretching. Ease off a bit

to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

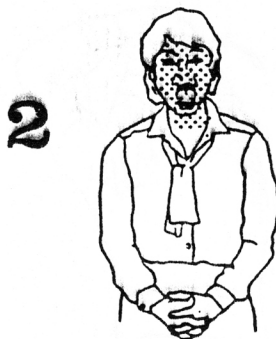
Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmical. Don't worry about how far you can stretch, stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.

**Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle, or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional before starting a stretching or exercise program.

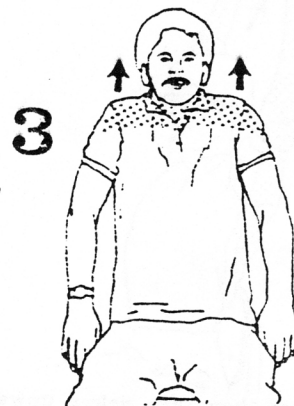
The dotted areas are those areas of the body where you will most likely feel the stretch.



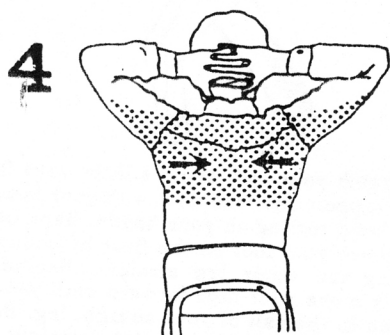
Separate and straighten your fingers until tension of a stretch is felt (fig. 1). Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for 10 seconds (fig. 2). Repeat stretch in fig. 1 once more.



This stretch may cause people around you to think you are very strange, indeed, but you often find a lot of tension in your face from eye strain. Raise your eyebrows and open your eyes as wide as possible. At the same time, open your mouth to stretch the muscles around your nose and chin and stick your tongue out. Hold this stretch for 5-10 seconds. Caution: If you have clicking or popping noises when opening mouth, check with your dentist before doing this stretch.



Shoulder Shrug: Raise the top of your shoulders toward your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.



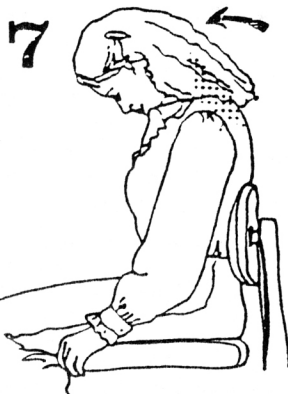
With fingers interlaced behind head, keep elbows straight out to side with upper body in a good aligned position. Now pull your shoulder blades toward each other to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this feeling of mild tension for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Do several times. This is good to do when shoulders and upper back are tense or tight.



Start with head in a comfortable, aligned position. Slowly tilt head to left side to stretch muscles on side of neck. Hold stretch for 10-20 seconds. Feel a good, even stretch. Do not overstretch. Then tilt head to right side and stretch. Do 2-3 times to each side.



From a stable, aligned sitting position turn your chin toward your left shoulder to create a stretch on the right side of your neck. Hold right stretch tensions for 10-20 seconds. Do each side twice.

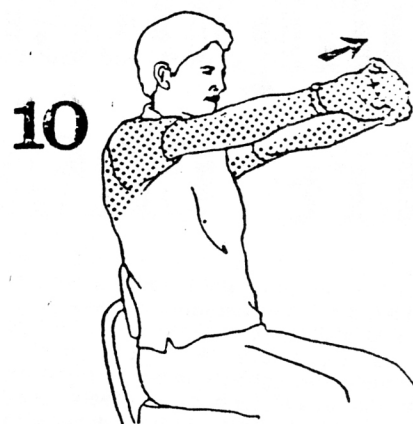


7 **8** **9**
Repeat stretch #3

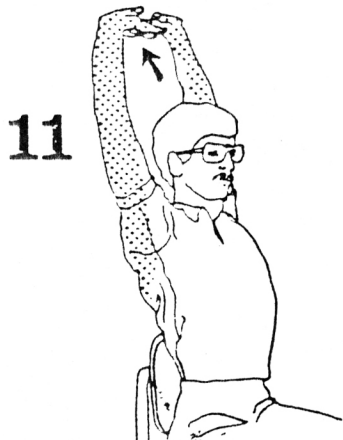
Gently tilt your head forward to stretch the back of the neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times. Hold only tensions that feel good. Do not stretch to the point of pain.



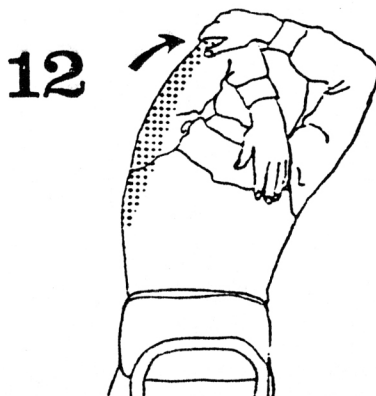
Hold your left arm just above the elbow with the right hand. Now gently pull elbow toward opposite shoulder as you look over your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides.



10
Interlace fingers, then straighten arms out in front of you. The palms should be facing away from you as you do this stretch. Feel stretch in arms and through the upper part of the back (shoulder blades). Hold stretch for 20-30 seconds. Do at least two times.



11
Interlace fingers then turn palms upwards above your head as you straighten your arms. Think of elongating your arms as you feel a stretch through arms and upper sides of rib cage. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Hold only stretches that feel releasing. Do three times.



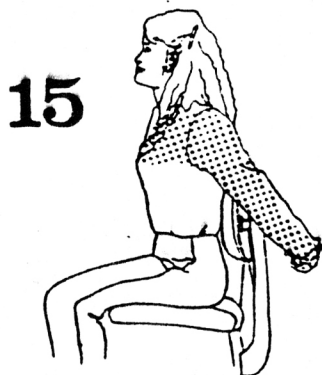
12
Hold left elbow with right hand, then gently pull elbow behind head until an easy tension-stretch is felt in shoulder or back of upper arm (triceps). Hold easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not overstretch. Do both sides.



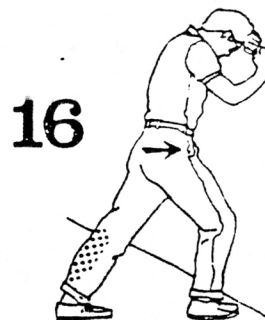
13
Hold onto your lower leg just below the knee. Gently pull bent leg toward your chest. To isolate a stretch in the side of your upper leg, use the right arm to pull bent leg across and toward the opposite shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds at easy stretch tension. Do both sides.



14
A stretch for the side of hip, lower and middle of back. Sit with left leg bent over right leg, then rest elbow or forearm of right arm on the outside of the upper thigh of the left leg. Now apply some controlled, steady pressure toward the right with the elbow or forearm. As you do this look over your left shoulder to get the stretch feeling. Do both sides. Hold for 15 seconds.



15
The next stretch is done with fingers interlaced behind your back. Slowly turn your elbows inward while straightening your arms. An excellent stretch for shoulders and arms. This is good to do when you find yourself slumping forward from your shoulders. This stretch can be done at any time. Hold for 5-15 seconds. Do twice.



16
To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms, your head resting on your hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the floor in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the floor and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.