

Appendix C: Exercises for office workers

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 on the diagram.
- Do not over-stretch.
- Stop if you feel discomfort when performing an action.
- Remember to do each side.

While you are exercising, read the notes alongside each instruction and consider whether your workstation is adjusted to suit you. Refer to Section 2 for information on job design.

Neck

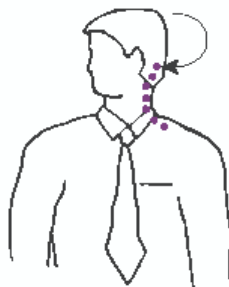
Exercise 1: Head rolls

Gently lower ear to shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Slowly roll chin to chest and up to other shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat several times and be careful not to extend your neck back too far.



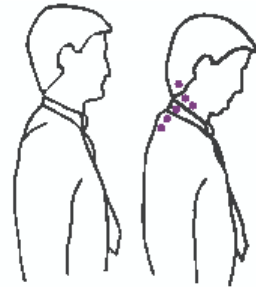
Exercise 2: Head turns

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



Exercise 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.



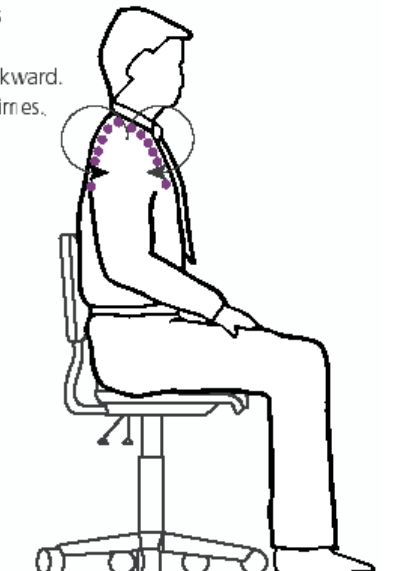
Check neck posture

- 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

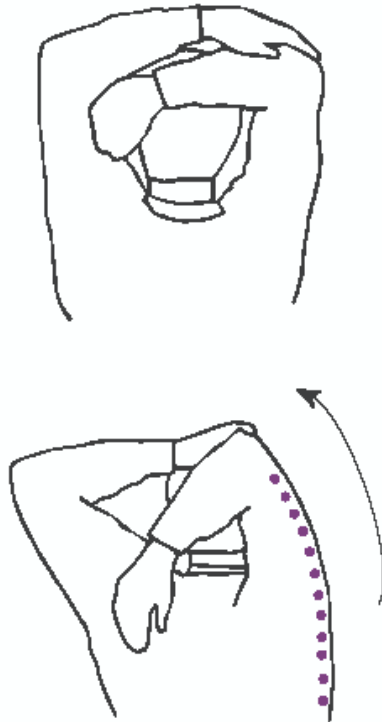
Exercise 4: Shoulder rolls

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



Exercise 5: Shoulder stretch

Stretch arm above head, cradle elbow with hand and gently pull elbow behind the head. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.



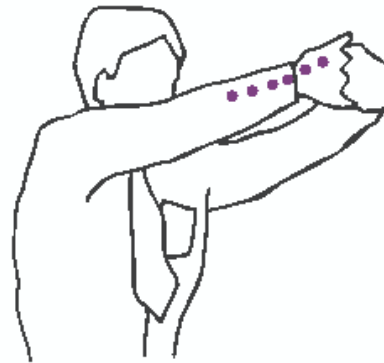
Check shoulder posture

Relax your shoulders and rest your hands on your lap. Bend your elbows to 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

Exercise 6: Wrist stretch

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



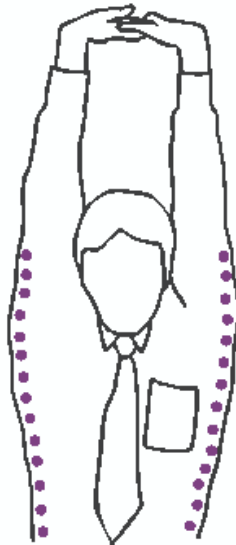
Check hand and wrist posture

- While keying keep your wrist straight while your fingers are 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 while keying. Keep hands suspended.
- Rest on the desk between periods of keying.

Upper and lower back

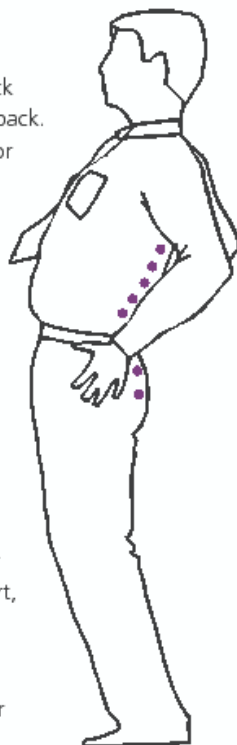
Exercise 7: Upper and lower back stretch

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



Exercise 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.



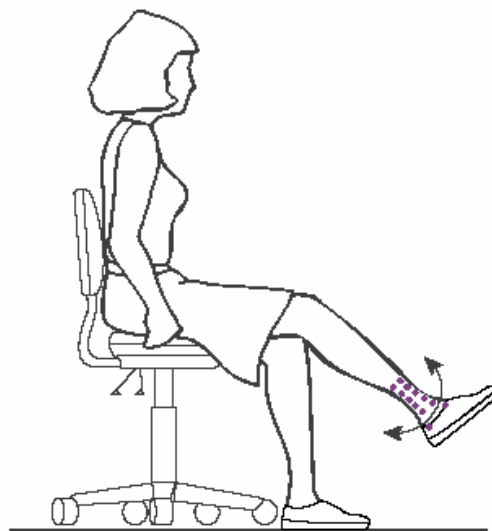
Check back support

- 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

Exercise 9: Foot rotation

Hold onto the chair with hands either side. Straighten leg and lift foot a few centimetres off floor. Rotate foot and ankle both ways (point toes up) and extend (point toes down). Repeat several times per foot.



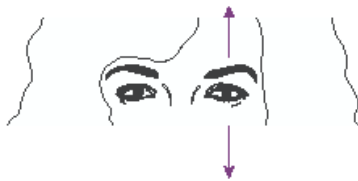
Check leg comfort

- 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

Exercise 10: Eye exercise

Sit up straight, face forward and repeat this sequence several times without moving head. Look up, then down. Look left, then right.



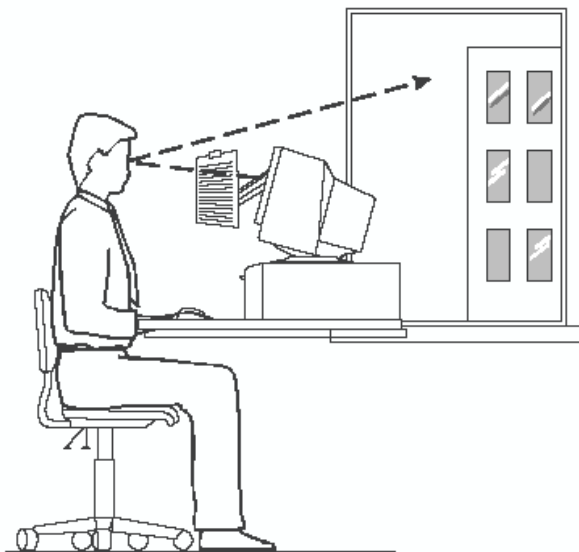
Check eye comfort

- 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 background for text is more comfortable for the eyes.

For further advice on office ergonomics, refer to earlier sections of this guide.

Exercise 11: Visual rest

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



SMART LIFTING TECHNIQUES

Size up the load.

- Assess the load (size, shape and weight);
- Assess whether the load needs to be moved;
- Where is it going to be placed? Check that there are no obstructions;
- Assess whether mechanical or human assistance is required.

Move the load as close to your body as possible.

- A load is heavier to lift or carry if it is not close to the body.
- The whole hand should be used to ensure a firm grip.

Always bend your knees.

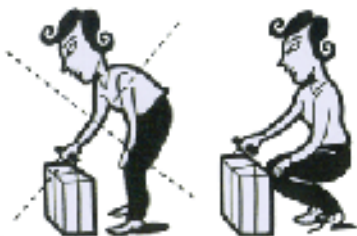
- Maintain balance.
- Keep feet apart and in a comfortable position.
- Minimise lower back bending.
- Bend knees preferable at as large an angle as possible but not at a right angle- use a semi-squat in preference to a full squat.

Raise the load with your legs.

- Achieve the lift smoothly and without jerkiness.
- Maintain the normal curvature of the spine to allow the force of the load to be distributed evenly from the spine to the pelvis.

Turn your feet in the direction that you want to move the load.

- Avoid unnecessary bending, twisting and reaching.
- Change direction by turning your feet and not your back.
- To set the load down, squat down, keep your head up and let your legs do the work.



And remember to **THINK TALL**-
chest lifted, shoulders relaxed,
chin tucked in and head level.

