

This document is intended as a guide to some exercises that aim to lead to a healthier and less stressful day. Please seek professional medical advice in the event of specific musculoskeletal disorders.

**MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS**  
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# Exercises for desk workers

It seems like we're busier than ever these days. We often work long hours and the lines between our working life and home life are blurring. Regular exercise can often take a back seat, while we get stuck at our desks for longer and longer. This may lead to stress, stiffness and pain. Taking 5-10 minutes out of your working day for these simple, but effective desk exercises can make for a healthier and less stressful day.

## LOWER LIMBS

### TOE TAPPING

Seated upright in your chair, gently tap your toes on the floor alternating between each foot.

### GLUTEAL SQUEEZE

To start toning, simply squeeze your buttocks together and hold for 5-10 seconds.

### LEG RAISES

While seated, straighten one or both legs and hold in place for 5 seconds. Lower the leg(s) back to the ground without letting the feet touch the floor. Repeat (alternating legs if raising them separately) for 15 reps.



### CALF RISES

Stand up from your chair and place feet hip width apart. Slowly move up onto your tip toes and slowly back to the ground. Repeat up to 15 times.

### WALL SQUATS

Standing with your back against the wall, bend the knees and slide your back down the wall until the thighs are parallel to the floor.



Sit and hold for 30-60 seconds.

# UPPER LIMBS AND NECK

## PRAY



Sitting upright place the palms of your hands together in front of your body to make a pray position. Ensure your elbows are at 90 degrees and in front of the body. Slowly move the hands downwards and feel a stretch under the wrist. Hold for 10 seconds then release.

Reverse pray: place back of your hands together and move the hands upwards.

## HANDSHAKE

Sitting up and with feet flat on the floor, clasp hands together as if giving yourself a handshake (with one thumb pointing to the floor and the other pointing to the ceiling). Then pull! Resist the motion of both arms (you should definitely feel this in those biceps).



Hold for 10 seconds or more, release, and repeat.

## SHOULDER SHRUG

Simply raise both shoulders up toward the ears, hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat for 15 reps.



## DOUBLE CHIN

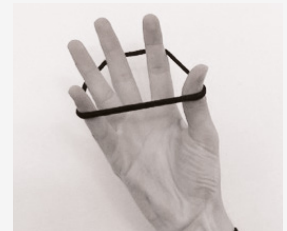
Sitting upright in your chair, pull your head backwards to create a 'double chin'. This is activating your deep flexor muscles in the neck and promotes correct posture.

You may sit at your desk all day with your chin poked forward which promotes bad posture and leads to hunchback posture. Repeat this motion slowly up to 15 times and repeat during the day. It may assist in changing your postural habits.



## HELLO

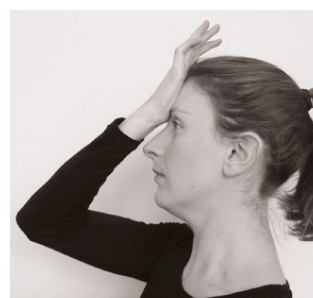
Using a hairband or elastic band, place the band around the fingers and stretch out the band using the strength of your fingers. Open your hand as wide as possible against the resistance to wave 'Hello'.



## ISOMETRIC NECK

Sitting upright in your chair, place your hand over your forehead. Push against your hand with your head and use your hand to resist this push. You are creating an isometric contraction of your neck muscles which will promote blood flow and prevent stiffness from when sitting for prolonged periods.

You can do the same movement by placing your hand at the back of your head and repeating the resistance movement. Hold the contraction for 5-10 seconds before releasing.



## SHOULDER SQUEEZE

Pull back the shoulders until the shoulder blades are pinched together. Pretend you're holding a pencil between the shoulder blades (or try it for real!). Hold for 5-10 seconds, release. Repeat for 15 reps.



# BACK AND CORE

## SPINAL STRETCH

Place your hands behind your neck to open out your chest. Slowly lean backwards to create a curve in the middle of your spine. Hold the stretch for 5-10 seconds before returning to an upright position.



\*This is only possible with a short-backed chair.



## PELVIC ROTATION

Sit slightly forward in your chair with your feet flat on the floor and hip width apart. Place your hands on your thighs.

Rotate your upper body to the right and move your left hand down the left thigh.

Hold the end range of movement for 5 seconds before returning to the start front facing position. Repeat the same turning to the left and moving the right hand down the right thigh.

## CHAIR TWIST

Sit sideways on the chair with the back of the chair on the right or left. Rotate your upper body to hold the back of the chair for 10 seconds. Try to keep your legs and hips facing forward. Repeat on the other side.



## CORE STRENGTHENING

Sitting upright, place your fingers on the front of your hip bones. Move your fingers in towards your belly button by 2cm and down towards your groin by 2cm. You should be placed above your core muscles. Contract these muscles by drawing your belly button into the spine. You should feel the muscle tighten under your fingers.

Start to hold this contraction for 15 seconds but keep breathing normally. Don't let the tightening feeling loosen when breathing normally.

This is a tricky exercise and takes time to build the strength of the muscle and reduce pressure on the spinal discs.