

ergonomics: your guide to the **office workout** **stretching and relaxation exercises**

Ergonomics

The stretching and relaxation exercises in this booklet are developed for people who spend most of their day seated at a desk or keyboard. The exercises are designed to relax muscles, improve circulation and decrease the effects of overuse and repetitive motion.

table of contents

Eyes.....	5-8
Neck.....	9-12
Shoulders and Arms	13-17
Upper and Lower Back	18-22
Hands.....	23-25
Wrist.....	26-28
Fingers	29
Legs and Feet	30-33
Breathing.....	34

Disclaimer: Do not perform these exercises if you or your doctor feels there is a risk of discomfort, strain or injury. You may wish to consult with your doctor before undertaking any of these suggested exercises.

Comfort Exercises

1. Blinking (produces tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes).
2. Yawning (produces tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes).
3. Expose eyes to natural light.

Eye Movements

Why:

To stretch and relax the eye movement muscle.

How:

1. Close eyes.
2. Slowly and gently move eyes up to the ceiling, then slowly down to the floor.
3. Repeat 5 times.
4. Slowly and gently move eyes to the left, then slowly to the right.
5. Repeat 5 times.



Focus Change

Why:

To stretch and relax the eye movement muscle.

How:

1. Hold one finger a few inches away from the eye.
2. Focus on the finger.
3. Slowly move the finger away.
4. Focus far into the distance and then back to the finger.
5. Slowly bring the finger back to within a few inches of the eye.
6. Focus on something more than 8 feet away.
7. Repeat 5 times.



Palming Your Eyes

Why:

To relax your eyes.

How:

1. While seated, brace elbows on the desk, close to the desk edge.
2. Let weight fall forward.
3. Cup hands over eyes.
4. Close eyes.
5. Inhale slowly through nose and hold for 5 seconds.
6. Continue deep breathing for 15 - 30 seconds.



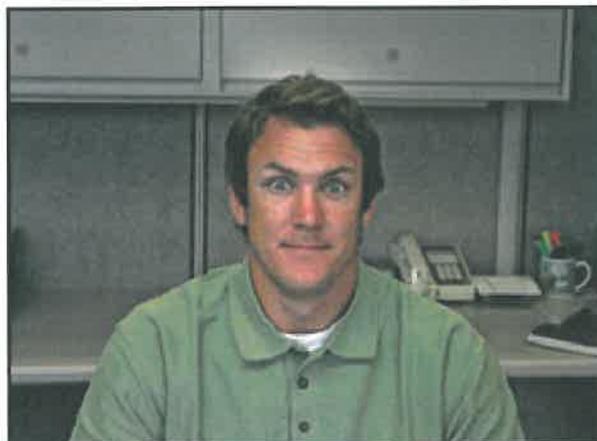
Deer in the Headlights

Why:

To relax and moisten the eyes.

How:

1. Close your eyes tightly.
2. Hold for a count of 5.
3. Open your eyes very wide.
4. Hold for a count of 5.
5. Repeat 5 times.



Forward and Back Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax muscles controlling neck movement.

How:

1. Sit with your spine straight, both feet flat on the floor.
2. Gently float your chin to your chest.
3. Hold for 5 seconds and relax.
4. Tilt head backwards.
5. Hold for 5 seconds and relax.
6. Repeat 5 times.



Sidebend Stretch

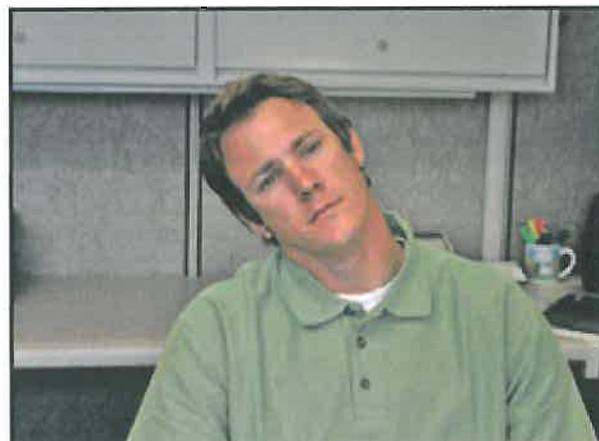
Why:

To stretch and relax the muscles controlling neck movement.

How:

1. Tilt head to one side (ear toward shoulder).
2. Hold for 15 seconds.
3. Relax.
4. Repeat 5 times on each side.

Note: For a deeper stretch move the arm of the side you're stretching behind your back.



Diagonal Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax muscles controlling neck movement.

How:

1. Turn head slightly and then look down as if looking in your pocket.
2. Hold for 15 seconds.
3. Relax.
4. Repeat 5 times on each side.



Neck Rotation

Why:

To stretch and relax muscles controlling neck movement.

How:

1. Turn head to the right as far as possible.
2. Hold for a count of 5.
3. Return head to normal position.
4. Turn head to the left as far as possible.
5. Hold for a count of 5.
6. Repeat 5 times.



shoulders and arms

Shoulder Shrugs

Why:

To stretch and relax the muscles in the shoulders.

How:

1. Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears and hold for 5 seconds.
2. Rotate shoulders back and down.
3. Repeat 10 times.



shoulders and arms

Shoulder Rolls

Why:

To stretch and relax the muscles in the shoulders.

How:

1. Roll shoulders forward in big circles 5 times.
2. Then, roll them backwards 5 times.



shoulders and arms

Arm Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax the muscles along the front and back of the shoulders.

How:

1. Extend your arms to the side and slightly behind you.
2. Gently try to squeeze your shoulder blades together.
3. Hold for 5 counts.
4. Bring the arms forward and touch the back of your hands together.
5. Hold for 5 counts.
6. Repeat 5 times.



shoulders and arms

Back Scratch

Why:

To stretch and relax your arms.

How:

1. Gently hold your elbow with your opposite hand.
2. Pull your elbow behind your head.
3. Reach your hand toward the middle of your back until you feel a gentle stretch.
4. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.
5. Relax.
6. Repeat complete exercise both sides 5 times.



shoulders and arms

Elbow Stretch

Why:

To keep elbows limber and to stretch and relax arms.

How:

1. Stretch arms in front, palms facing ceiling.
2. Curl your arms up as far as you can.
3. Hold for 5 counts.
4. Repeat with palms facing the floor.
5. Repeat complete exercises 5 times.



upper and lower back

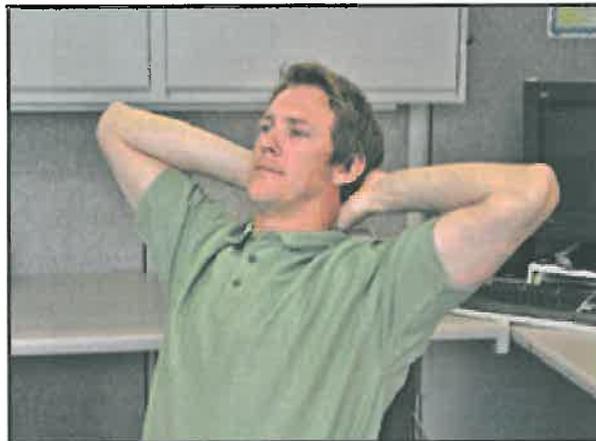
Executive Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax the back muscles.

How:

1. While sitting, lock hands behind head.
2. Bring elbows back as far as possible.
3. Inhale deeply while leaning back and stretching.
4. Hold for 20 seconds.
5. Relax.
6. Repeat 2 times.



upper and lower back

Lower Back Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax the back muscles.

How:

1. Sit with spine straight and both feet flat on the floor.
2. Relax your chest to your thighs, relaxing your head down, arms down to the side.
3. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 times.



upper and lower back

Spinal Twist

Why:

To stretch and relax back muscles.

How:

1. Sit with spine straight and both feet flat on the floor.
2. Cross your right ankle over your left leg.
3. Place your left hand on the outside of your right knee.
4. Inhale, lengthening your spine by lifting your chest upward and outward.
5. Exhale, turning your gaze toward the back of the chair.
6. With each exhale, you should try and turn your spine a bit more.
7. Repeat 5 times.



upper and lower back

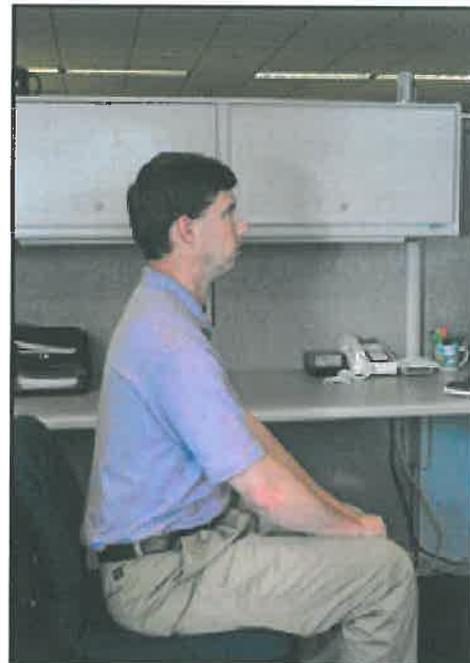
Pelvic Tilts

Why:

To stretch and relax the lower back area.

How:

1. Keep upper back touching the chair.
2. Push pelvis forward.
3. Hold for 5 counts.
4. Push pelvis backwards trying to press your belt line back against the chair.
5. Hold for 5 counts.
6. Repeat 5 times.



Note: For demonstration purposes, the photo was taken with the subject not against the back of the chair.

upper and lower back

Shoulder Blade Stretch

Why:

To stretch and relax the upper back.

How:

1. Cross right arm over left arm, palms down or palms out.
2. Bend at elbows allowing the backs of arms to touch.
3. Try to bring the backs of hands flat against each other.
4. Hold for 10 seconds.
5. For a deeper stretch, bring elbows up level with shoulders.
6. Cross left arm over right arm.
7. Bend at elbows allowing backs of arms to touch.
8. Bring the backs of hands flat against each other.
9. Hold for 10 seconds.
10. Repeat complete exercise 2 times.



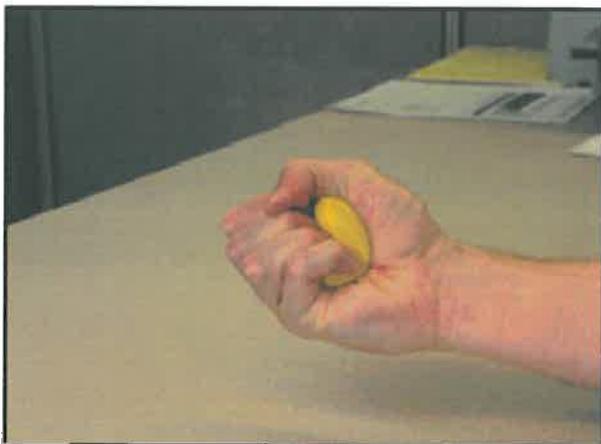
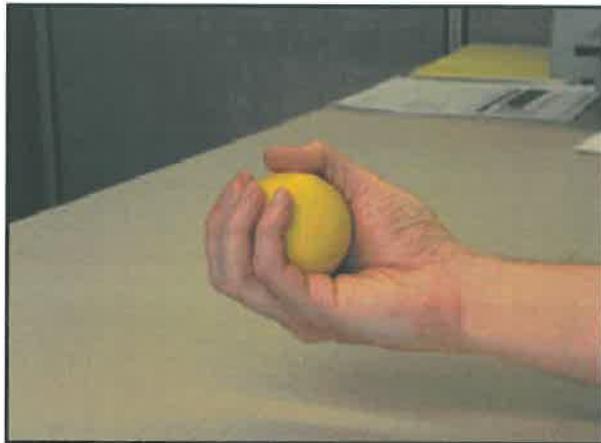
Hand Squeeze

Why:

To relax the hands and strengthen the wrists.

How:

1. Squeeze a wrist pad, rubber ball, arm rest of chair, rolled up towel or anything that is soft.
2. Hold for 5 counts and release.
3. Repeat 5 times.



Hand Massage

Why:

To stretch and relax the hands.

How:

1. Massage the inside and outside of the hand using the thumb and fingers.
2. Repeat frequently (including before beginning work).



Hand Fist

Why:

To relax the hands and strengthen the wrists.

How:

1. Make a tight fist.
2. Hold for 5 counts.
3. Open fist, spreading and stretching the fingers as far as possible.
4. Hold for 5 counts.
5. Repeat each exercise 5 times.



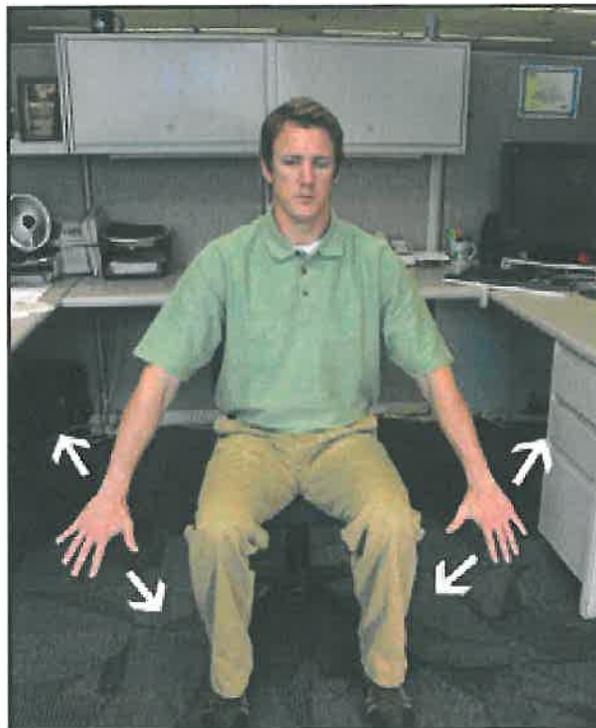
Hand Shake

Why:

To relax the hands.

How:

1. While sitting, drop arms to the side.
2. Shake hands downward gently.
3. Repeat 5 times.



Wrist Stretch

Why:

To improve wrist strength and flexibility.

How:

1. Hold arm straight out in front of you.
2. Pull the hand backwards with the other hand, hold for 15 seconds. Then pull downward.
3. Hold for 15 seconds.
4. Relax.
5. Repeat 5 times each.



Prayer Position

Why:

To improve wrist strength and flexibility.

How:

1. Place your hands together, finger-to-finger, palm-to-palm, in prayer pose in front of the heart center.
2. Slowly inhale, pressing the palms of your hands firmly together, fingers pointing up.
3. Holding the prayer pose, exhale slowly as you lower your hands as far as possible.
4. Remember to maintain prayer pose.
5. Inhale and slowly raise your hands in front.
6. Exhale slowly and lower your hands.
7. Repeat 5 times.



Finger Massage

Why:

To relax tired fingers.

How:

1. Place thumb on palm of hand and middle finger on knuckles.
2. Gently massage the area between fingers and base of thumb.
3. Switch hands and repeat the procedure.
4. Massage the fingers from palm to tip.



legs and feet

Knees to Chest

Why:

To stretch and relax the legs.

How:

1. Hold knee with both hands.
2. Bring it up as far as you can toward the chest.
3. Hold for 5 counts.
4. Repeat with other leg.
5. Repeat exercise 5 times.



legs and feet

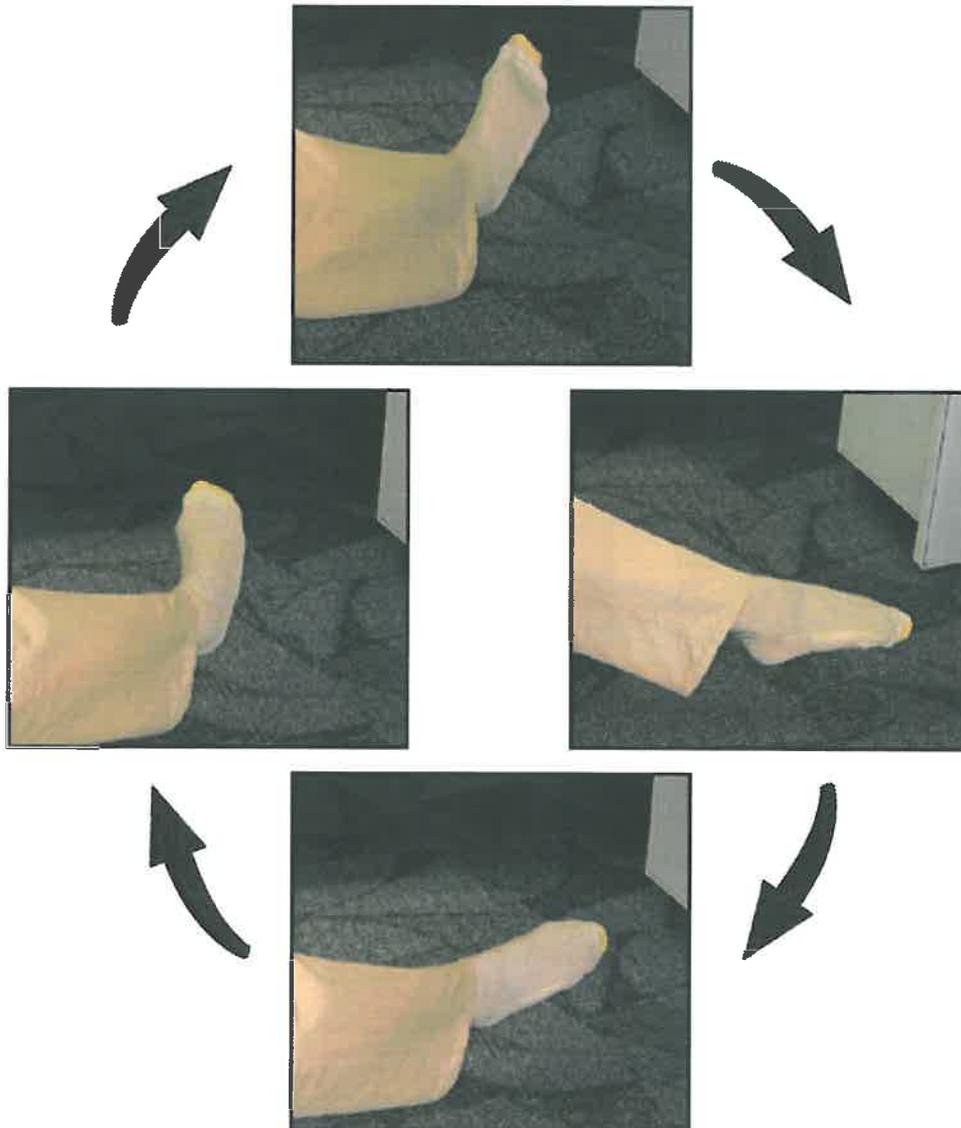
Foot Rotation

Why:

To stretch and relax feet and ankles.

How:

1. While sitting, slowly rotate each foot from the ankle.
2. Rotate 5 times in one direction, then 5 times in the opposite direction.
3. Relax.
4. Repeat 2 times.



legs and feet

Hip Opener

Why:

To stretch and relax the hamstrings and buttocks.

How:

1. Sit with your spine straight and both feet flat on the floor.
2. Place your left ankle on top of your right knee.
3. Breathing long and deep, slowly stretch your upper body over your left leg, leading with the crown of your head.
4. Let your arms hang to the floor or rest them at your sides.
5. Relax your neck.
6. Hold for 10 seconds.
7. To complete this posture: round your back, uncurling each vertebra. Release your left leg and repeat on other side.



legs and feet

Foot Flexion

Why:

To stretch and relax feet and ankles.

How:

1. Tilt the foot upwards.
2. Hold for 5 counts.
3. Then, tilt the same foot downward.
4. Hold for 5 counts.
5. Repeat on other foot.
6. Repeat each side 5 times.



breathing

Breathing

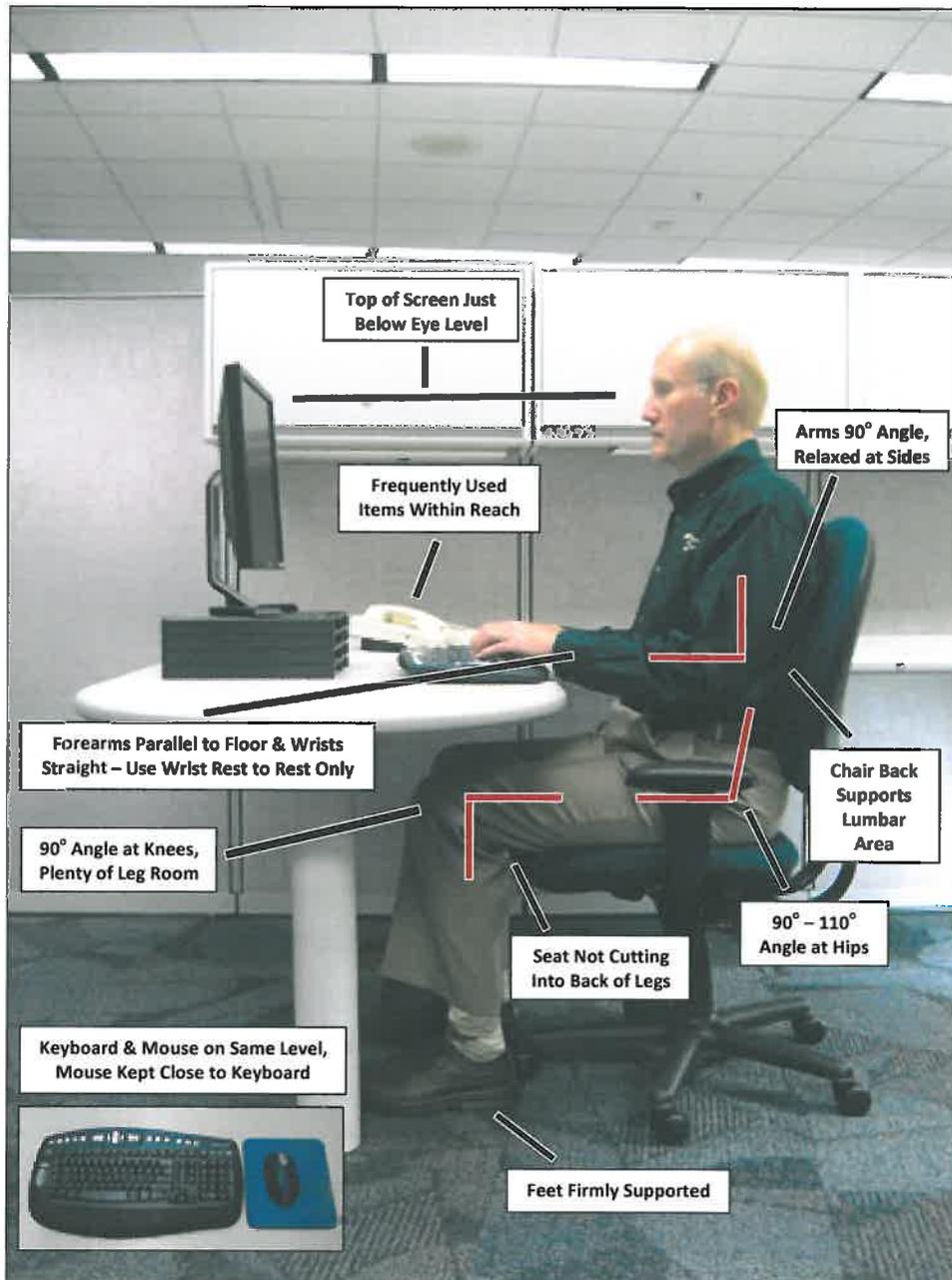
Why:

To relax the body and calm the mind.

How:

1. While standing or sitting, or in an otherwise relaxed position.
2. Place one hand on the abdomen and one on the chest.
3. Inhale slowly through the nose.
4. Hold for 4 seconds.
5. Exhale slowly through the mouth.
6. Repeat.

workstation posture basics



For additional information, contact
the Home Office Risk Improvement department
of EMC Insurance Companies.

717 Mulberry
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-345-2520



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