

OFFICE YOGA

Working in an office or at a computer for prolonged periods of time can put strain on the neck, shoulder and back muscles which in turn can lead to tension and stiffness. This tension can cause headaches, as well as back, neck and shoulder pain. If left unattended, it could also impact your ability to function effectively at work and your overall quality of life. Simple techniques such as Office Yoga may help alleviate the pain and other symptoms by releasing tension and increasing muscle strength and flexibility.

Take a few minutes for yourself and incorporate some Office Yoga into your daily routine.

Benefits of Office Yoga Include:

- Released tension
- Increased flexibility
- Stronger muscles
- Decreased stress, anxiety, and depression
- Improved concentration and memory
- It is energizing
- Improved balance
- It requires minimal effort and is very relaxing
- Slow dynamic and static movements reduce risk of injury
- Decreased resting heart rate
- Decreased pain
- Improved immunity
- It is noncompetitive and process oriented
- It allows you to focus internally

Before you begin:

- Breathing is very important in the practice of Yoga. When doing the exercises you want to take deep, slow breaths in and out.
- Exercises should be done slowly and with control.
- To gain the full benefit it is important that you focus and be in total control of your self; your mind, body, and spirit.
- Take a few moments to just sit quietly before you start to gain concentration and focus.
- Be aware of your posture, your upper body should be straight and tall, yet relaxed.
- Yoga takes time to learn, you may need to do a few sessions before you become accustomed to the movements.
- Have fun and enjoy your time to relax and de-stress.

PLEASE NOTE – if you have any preexisting health concerns relating to the neck, back or shoulders it is recommended that you check with your doctor prior to initiating this type of activity. As with any physical activity, if you experience pain or discomfort from these exercises you should discontinue the activity.

SHOULDERS

SHOULDER CIRCLING – WARM UP

Start Position: Sit in a basic position with your back straight and shoulders relaxed on an armless chair or stool letting the hands hang loosely at your sides. If you do not have a chair without arms you can stand up straight and tall.

Activity: Slowly move your shoulders forward in a circular manner about 10 times and repeat the same in a slow backward circular motion. Let your arms be free and easy.

SHOULDER BLADE SQUEEZE

Start Position: Sit on an armless chair or stool (on the floor or standing if you have no armless chair) and clasp your hands or interlace your fingers behind you at a normal sitting posture with the back straight. This exercise starts with an exhalation.

As you Exhale: Draw straightened elbows towards each other squeezing your shoulder blades together.

Hold for 2 Breaths

As you Inhale: The straightened elbows are relaxed and allowed to move away from each other slowly.

Repeat 3 times with one breath out and in for each repetition



ARM ROTATION

Start Position: Place fingertips on shoulders with your elbows in front of you.

As you Inhale: Bring your elbows towards each other and then lift both elbows together allowing the elbows to move away from each other as they pass by the sides of your head. Try to reach with your fingertips as low as possible on your shoulder blades.

Hold for 3 breaths

As you Exhale: Start lowering your elbows to start position while bringing your elbows together.

Repeat 3 times



SHOULDER LIFTING AND SQUEEZING

Start Position: Sit in a basic position with back and arms straight.

As you Inhale: Slowly draw your shoulders up towards your ears.

As you Exhale:

- Draw your shoulders slowly backward squeezing your shoulder blades together. Pull back as far as you can---without causing discomfort
- While continuing to exhale bring your shoulders downwards and gradually let up on the squeeze until your hands reach the normal start position. At this point shoulders must droop down as though a heavy weight is being carried in both hands.

Repeat 3 times



NECK HEAD TURNING EXERCISE 1

Start Position: Sit on your chair with your back and head straight.

As you Inhale: Slowly turn your head to look over your left shoulder keeping the level of the head the same as in the start position.

Hold for 3 Breaths

As you Exhale: Slowly come back to start position.

Repeat each side 2 times



EXERCISE 2

Start Position: Sit in your chair with back and head straight.

As you Inhale: Slowly bring your head forward and bend it slightly below the straight position trying to touch the top of the breast bone.

Hold for 2 breaths

As you Exhale: Slowly come back to the start position.

Repeat 2 times



NECK STRETCHING FORWARD LOWERING

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with back straight and shoulders relaxed and interlock hands behind your neck.

As you Inhale: Remain in the start position.

As you Exhale: Slowly tilt your head gently downwards, only go as far as is comfortable. The hands help you to stretch the muscles a little more than what is possible by normal tipping of the head.

Hold position for 3 breaths, Inhale Again and go back to starting position.

Repeat 2 times



SIDEWAYS LOWERING

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with back straight and shoulders relaxed. Place the right hand under the side of your chair to keep your body in a steady position while stretching. Place the left hand on the right side of the head (see picture).

As you Inhale: Slowly tilt your head to the left and only bend the neck as far as it is comfortable. Do not press hard or pull the head.

Hold for 3 breaths

As you Exhale: Bring your head slowly back up to the starting position.

Repeat on each side 2 times



DIAGONAL LOWERING

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with back straight and shoulders relaxed. Place your right hand below the bottom of your chair to keep yourself steady when stretching. Turn your head 45 degrees to the left. Place your left hand on your head in such a way that the elbow is pointing forwards (see picture).

As you Exhale: Gently tilt your head downwards till it is comfortable and holding this position.

Hold for 3 breaths

As you Inhale: Gently bring your head back to the starting position.

Repeat on both sides 2 times



SHOULDER BLADES

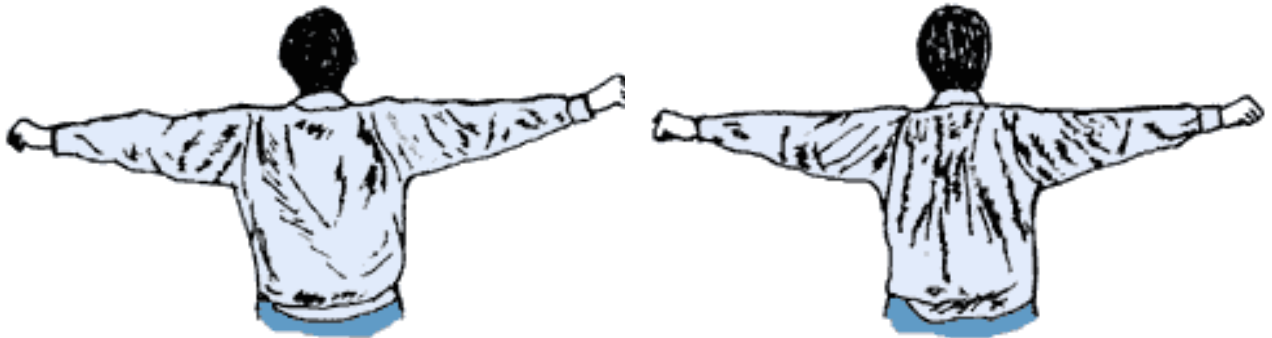
EXERCISE 1

Start Position: Sit on your chair with back and head straight. Arms should rest on your lap.

As you Inhale: Raise your arms sideways to shoulder level. Make your hands into fists. Push your arms backward and downward so as to create a light squeezing of the shoulder blade and shoulder muscles. Try to keep the shoulders low and relaxed.

Hold for 2 Breaths

As you Exhale: Bring your arms back to shoulder level and repeat. After 2 repetitions bring arms gently back to start position.



EXERCISE 2

Start Position: Sit up straight in your chair and raise your arms sideways to shoulder level so that your fingertips point towards the ceiling.

As you Inhale: Squeeze your shoulder blades firmly together by pushing your arms backward.

As you Exhale: Keeping the same position slowly lower your arms keeping the shoulder blades squeezed firmly together until the arms are at the sides of the body. Hold for 2 breaths and allow shoulder blades to expand. Relax the arms slowly and repeat.

Repeat 3 times



UPPER BACK

CHEST EXPANSION EXERCISE

Start Position: Sit up in a basic sitting position or stand. Be aware of your posture. Interlace your fingers behind your back.

As you Inhale: Lift your interlaced fingers and straight arms towards your shoulders. Lift arms as high as you comfortably can and squeeze the shoulder blades together.

As you Exhale: Lower arms and allow elbows to bend.

Repeat 2 times and hold for about 5-10 seconds each repetition.



UPPER BACK TENSION RELIEVERS

Exercise 1

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. Interlace your fingers in front of you with your palms facing away from your body.

As you Inhale: Push the palms away from you to above your head so that your palms are now facing the ceiling.

Hold for 4 breaths

As you Exhale: Lower your arms to the start position in front of you continuing your outward stretch away from you.

Repeat 3 times



EXERCISE 2

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. Interlace your fingers in front of you with your palms facing your knees.

As you Inhale: Push the palms away from you to above your head so that your interlaced palms are now facing the ceiling and arms fully stretched.

As you Exhale: Lower your interlocked hands behind your head in such a way that your palms are facing the back of your head with out touching yourself. Push your elbows and shoulder backwards and squeeze the shoulder blades together.

Hold for 3 Breaths and relax for 5 seconds in between repetitions. Return to the start position after 3 repetitions.



EXERCISE 3

Start Position: Sit in your basic sitting position with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.

As you Inhale: Interlace your fingers and place the hands behind your head.

As you Exhale: Adjust your elbows so that your left elbow points to the ceiling and your right elbow points to the ground. Repeat on other side so that your right elbow points to the ceiling and your left elbow points toward the ground.

Hold each side for 5 Breaths

Repeat 2 times

