

YOU DESERVE A (STRETCH) BREAK TODAY!



BRIEF STRETCHES CAN INCREASE EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS

You have been working straight for several hours. Now you're getting drowsy, becoming stiff, and losing focus. You may even start making errors. Everyone has been there, so what can be done about it? Brief stretch breaks can be taken right there in your own office, at your desk! This will help eliminate stiffness, prevent strain, and reenergize! How can such a short small movement make such big differences? Breathing becomes deeper bringing more oxygen to your brain. Physical stress and tension is released from your muscles creating relief and energy. Tissues release toxins, cleansing your body of pollutants. After just a few minutes, you feel rejuvenated and can focus again!



Stretching can be done anywhere—no gym clothes necessary!

STRETCHING SUCCESS

* Starting a stretching routine in your office can be a challenge, especially if you are new to stretching, but after just a few mini-sessions, you will feel like a pro!

* Getting started may be the biggest challenge: you may worry what others will think or say if they see you. Once you get started, you will be hooked. If others say something or laugh, invite them to join you. Before long, it will catch on!

* Oxygen is key to stretching (and to re-energizing), so be sure to breathe! Try to slow down and deepen your breaths.

* Speaking of slow, be sure to

stretch slowly and gently! Over time, you will notice improvement: you will become more flexible and be able to go deeper.

* Be sure to hold each move for at least 15 seconds (unless otherwise stated), longer if you choose. Try to keep a static stretch and not bounce.

* Do not over-do it! Flex to a point of release. If it hurts, you are going to far—loosen up a little. The moves should feel good, not cause pain!

* During your stretching, think positive thoughts. Release any worries or thoughts about work. This is a time to renew and refresh!

CORE: BACK & ABS

Back/Side Stretch: Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keep elbows straight. Press arms as far back as you can. Slowly lean to each side.

Touch the Sky: Reach your hands up as high as possible.

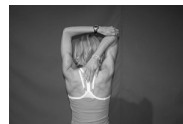
Big Hug: Place right hand on left shoulder and vice-versa. Press elbows toward chest.

Back Bends: Place your hands in the small of your back and slowly bend backwards until you feel a gentle stretch in your trunk or reach up and back.

Touch your Toes: With legs straight (sitting or standing) reach toward touching your



Touch Your Toes



Scratch Your Back

SHOULDERS & NECK

Shoulder Shrug: Inhale deeply and shrug your shoulders, lifting them high up to your ears. Hold. Release and drop. Repeat three times.

Shoulder Roll: Rotate your shoulders forward 5 times slowly and then backwards 5 times slowly. Leave them back and down.

Scratch Your Back: With your right hand behind your neck and your elbow pointed upwards, rest your left palm on right elbow. Gently push down on the elbow and hold. Switch sides.

Chin Touch: Lower your chin to your chest and hold. Feel the stretch in the

toes or holding the back of your ankles.

Torso Twist: Inhale and as you exhale, turn to the right and grab the back of your chair with your right hand, and grab the arm of the chair with your left. Use your grasp on the chair to help twist your torso around as far to the back of the room as possible. Repeat on the other side.

Cross Over: Extend one arm out straight in front of you. With the other hand, grab the elbow of the outstretched arm and pull it across your chest, stretching your shoulder and upper back muscles. Switch sides.

Hip Openers: Bring right ankle up to rest just above left knee. Bend forward at the hip. Switch sides.

Cross Over



Neck Relaxer

back of the neck. Alternate with "Chin Up" for 5 repetitions.

Chin Up: Raise chin toward the ceiling and hold. Alternate with "Chin Touch" for 5 repetitions.

Neck Relaxer: Slowly and gently lower left ear toward left shoulder keeping your face forward. You may assist by pulling down with left arm. Hold and feel stretch on opposite side of neck. Alternate sides for 3-5 repetitions.

Head Circles: Gently roll your head in circles to capture the chin touch, neck relaxer, and chin up all in one! Rotate clockwise 3-5 times and then counter-clockwise 3-5 times keeping your neck as loose as possible.

ARMS, HANDS, & WRISTS

Straight in Front: Interlock fingers in front of chest and stretch arms forward, keep palms facing outward.

Wrist Bend: Stretch your left hand out in front of you, pointing fingers toward the floor. Use your right hand to increase the stretch, pushing your fingers down and toward the body. Be gentle. Switch sides.

Wrist Flex: Stretch your left hand out straight in front, wrist bent, with fingers pointing skyward. Use your right hand to pull the fingers back toward your body.



Straight in Front

Wrist Flex



Fist Slide: Start with hands open. Close fingers to make a fist (keep thumb on top). Next slide fingers up, so only the tips are bent. Flex wrists back and hold.

Wide Open: Start with your hand in a fist. Next open your hand and stretch your fingers apart from one another and hold.

Wrist Circles: With you hand in a fist in front of you, rotate hand in circles. Do five clockwise and five counter-clockwise. Repeat with opposite hand.



Ankle Flex & Stretch

Flamingo



LEGS, FEET, & ANKLES

Leg Lifts: Sit forward on the chair so that your back is not touching the chair's back. Place feet flat on the floor. Lift one foot a few inches off the floor, keeping your leg straight. Hold momentarily, and return your foot to the floor. Switch legs. Do 3-5 reps on each leg.

Flamingo: Holding onto the back of your chair or your desk, bring one leg up behind you and grab a hold of your ankle or the top of your foot. Keep your knees as close together as possible, and do not lock either knee. You may let go of the chair to incorporate a balance move too. Hold for 15 seconds or longer. Switch legs.

Toes Up, Down: Rest your heels on the floor and lift up the rest of the foot. Pull

toes up and spread them open. Hold. Curl toes under and hold. Do both feet at once or alternate.

Ankle Flex & Stretch: Hold leg straight in front of you and pull toes toward knee. Hold. Next point your toes away from you and hold.

Ankle Circles: Hold leg straight in front of you and rotate your foot clockwise 3-5 times. Repeat counter-clockwise. Repeat with other foot.

Alphabet by Foot: Pretend to write the alphabet in lower-case cursive with your big toe. Repeat with other foot.