

# Take a Break...by Stretching

Incorporate simple stretches to break up the monotonous workday and avoid tension that accumulates in your muscles. This helps you catch your stress response early — before it has a chance to turn into something painful like neck and back pain. You will feel relaxed and recharged!



**Neck rolls** – Gently lean your head to the right side (ear to shoulder), and then the left side. Bring your head to an upright position. Slowly nod your head up and down (like you are motioning “yes”). Slowly turn your head and look to the right and then to your left (like you are motioning “no”). Now imagine drawing a circle with your forehead, slowly rolling your head in one direction. Pause your head in an upright position and now roll the other direction. Repeat each movement several times.



**Shoulder rolls** – Begin with your arms down by your side. Gently raise your shoulders up toward your earlobes. Gently lower your shoulders down toward the floor. Think of this as a slow motion shoulder shrug (like you are motioning “I don’t know”). Now, begin moving your shoulders in a circular motion toward the front of your body. Switch direction of the circle so that you are moving toward the back of your body. Repeat each movement several times.



**Chest stretch** – Place your hands on your hips with your elbows pointed out. Gently squeeze your shoulder blades (in the back) toward each other. Release and repeat several times.



**Back stretch** – Place your hands on your thighs and slowly lean forward with a straight back. Now, tuck your chin toward your chest and roll your back up to an upright position. Repeat several times.



**Calf stretch** – Holding on to a table or wall, step back with one leg. Keep the back leg straight and your entire foot on the floor as you lean forward toward the wall (or table). You should feel a stretch in the lower leg. Switch sides.

## Take A Break...with Deep Breathing

When we are stressed we take quick, shallow breaths from the chest. Instead, try to breathe from the belly. As you inhale try to expand your abdomen, not your chest. This allows you to breathe in more air and the oxygen your body is craving.

The best way to control stress in your life is through learning, practicing, and using a variety of stress management techniques that will all work together.