

Introduction

You may notice that working at a computer for long periods of time, without taking a short break, may cause you to feel some discomfort. When you first feel discomfort, stop what you are doing, and take a few minutes to do the stretches described in this pamphlet.

Each of these stretches focuses on a specific part of the body – back, neck, shoulders, elbows, forearms, hands, and wrists. Each stretch should be done **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently. The benefits are well worth the few minutes it takes out of your workday.

Head, Neck and Shoulders

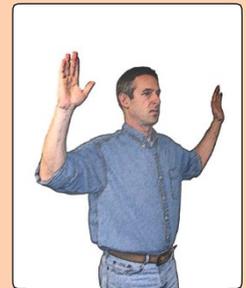
Head and Neck

- Sitting upright in your chair, with your ears positioned over your shoulders, focus on an object at eye level within your work area.
- Continue focusing on this object and **s-l-o-w-l-y** pull your chin straight back about half of the way. If you begin to look up at the ceiling, you are tilting your head backwards. If this happens, go back to neutral and refocus on the object you chose.
- Put your index finger on your chin and **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently push and glide the head back and hold for 15-30 seconds. You should feel a gentle stretch in the muscles at the back of your neck.
- Keep looking at your object and **s-l-o-w-l-y** return back to neutral.
- Repeat this stretch 3-5 times.



Chest and Shoulders

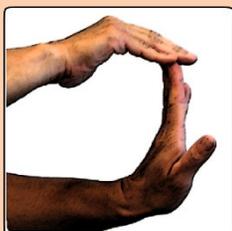
- Sitting upright in your chair, raise your arms with your elbows bent so that your upper arms are parallel to the floor, fingers pointing towards the ceiling.
- **S-l-o-w-l-y** pull your arms back. You should feel your shoulder blades come together.
- Hold for a count of 15-30 seconds.
- Return to the starting position and repeat 3-5 times.



Fingers and Thumb

Finger Pull

- Hold one arm straight out in front of you, palm down.
- Bend your wrist, fingers pointing towards the ceiling.
- With other hand grasping the entire four fingers of the outstretched hand, **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently pull the four fingers backwards until you feel a gentle stretch up inside the forearm to the elbow.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Release the fingers and shake out your hand and arm.
- Change hands and repeat the stretch.
- Do each hand 3-5 times.



Thumb Stretch

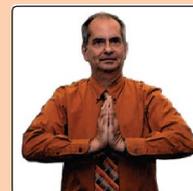
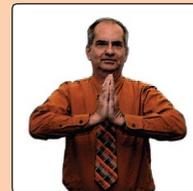
- Hold your arms out straight in front of you with your palms facing up.
- Put your thumb into the base of your palm and cover your thumb with fingers.
- Rotate your fists a quarter turn towards each other.
- S-l-o-w-l-y and gently rotate the hands down toward the floor.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds. You should feel a gentle stretch from the topside of the thumb to the wrist.
- Relax and shake out your hands and arms.
- Repeat this stretch 3-5 times.



Arms and Wrists

Forearm Stretch #1

- Put the heels of your hands together with your fingers pointing towards the ceiling, forearms parallel to the floor.
- Keeping your hands together, **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently lower the heels of your hands slightly.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds. Bring your hands back up to the starting position.
- Repeat this stretch 3-5 times.



Forearm Stretch #2

- Hold your arms out straight in front of you with your palms facing down.
- Make a loose fist with your hands.
- **S-l-o-w-l-y** and gently bend your fists down towards the floor. Your knuckles should be pointing towards the floor.
- Now **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently rotate your fists toward the little finger side of your hand.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds. You should feel a stretch from the topside of the wrists up to the elbow.
- Relax and shake out your hands and arms.
- Repeat this stretch 3-5 times.



Open Hand Stretch

- Start with your hands in a loose fist position.
- **S-l-o-w-l-y** open your hands and extend your fingers.
- Return to a loose fist position and repeat 3-5 times.



Legs

Hamstring Stretch

- Raise your foot on an elevated surface, at least 10" to 12" high. A step stool or the bottom shelf of a locked rolling cart works.
- Looking forward, **s-l-o-w-l-y** bend at hips, keeping raised leg straight.
- Stop when you feel tension and hold 15-30 seconds.
- To increase tension, pull toes towards face.
- Switch legs and repeat stretch 3-5 times.



Quadriceps Stretch

- Holding on for balance with your right hand, grab your left foot or ankle with your left hand.
- Feel the stretch in the front of your thigh. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat this stretch 3-5 times
- Repeat stretch on opposite leg.



Trunk and Low Back

Side Bend

- Feet shoulder width apart, arms at sides.
- With one hand, reach up overhead and **s-l-o-w-l-y** lean towards opposite side. Keep both feet flat on ground.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Return to starting position and repeat 3-5 times on each side.



Backbend

- Feet shoulder width apart, hands on hips.
- Looking straight ahead (don't throw your head back) **s-l-o-w-l-y** and gently bend backwards.
- Caution – You should feel tension, not pain, in the low back.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds, but don't hold your breath.
- Return to starting position and repeat 3-5 times.



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