

# STRETCHES FOR DESK WORK

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Try these to reduce tension and discomfort at work. Stretch only to a comfortable level, not to pain. If you feel any of these movements are difficult because of tension, let your massage therapist know you would like to work on releasing that area. If you have intense pain with any of these stretches, discontinue them until you discuss them with your physician.

1. For neck tension, drop your chin to your chest as you exhale. Inhale and very slowly let your right ear drop to your right shoulder. Exhale and roll your chin to your chest. Inhale and roll your left ear to your left shoulder. Exhale and return to the chest. Continue these movements, slowly and easily, for several minutes. Note: Many yoga and other exercise instructors advise people to avoid rolling the head behind the shoulders.
2. To stretch your whole spine, raise your arms over your head. Stretch your right arm toward the ceiling, hold and relax. Then repeat with your left arm. Breathe slowly, exhaling completely as you stretch. Repeat several times. If you have high blood pressure, skip this one.
3. For joint mobility, stretch one leg in front of you and roll your ankle in circles, both directions. Repeat on the other side. Then, with your arms at your sides, roll your wrists one way, then the other.
4. As if you had a piece of tape stuck to your fingers, shake your arms and hands vigorously to get it off. Shake for 30 seconds and feel the energy move through your limbs.
5. For upper body tension, clasp your hands behind your head with your elbows to the side. Exhale and very slowly twist your head and torso to the right. Hold for a moment, inhale and turn back to center. Then exhale, turn to the left, and return to center. Repeat 5 times each direction, up to 3 times a day.
6. To ease back tension, push your chair away from the desk. Stretch both arms forward and rest your hands on the desk. Exhale and lower your head while arching your back. Relax for a moment with your head down, then inhale and raise your head and chest, arching your back in the other direction. Stretch several times this way, breathing slowly and completely.

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