

The Desk Workout

Workplace Wellness for Healthy
Bodies and Minds

Move It or Lose It

- We are made to move.....not sit at a desk for 12 hours a day!
- As ergonomic as your work station may be, sitting produces back pain, headaches, and fatigue. The longer you sit, the less productive you become!

Recommendations

- The U.S. Surgeon General recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate activity five days a week.
- How are you doing toward reaching this goal?

What is Your Reality?

- The Robot Walk
 - Stiff movement in the morning or after sitting for a period of time
- Wasted time spent looking for the closest parking space
- Repetitive Motion Injuries due to too much work, too few breaks!
 - Carpal tunnel, tendinitis

Good news!

- Any amount of exercise helps
- Benefits are cumulative
- 10-minute bouts of cardio count as aerobic
- 60-second bouts are better than nothing

60-second breaks

- Improve productivity
- Improve circulation
- Heighten mental clarity
- Increase longevity
- Decrease risk of disease

Aerobic Tricks

- One minute of jumping jacks
- Running / marching in place
- Pretend Jump rope in place
- 30 sec. overhead arm press, 30 sec seated foot tap
- Take a walk-about
- Up and down the stairs
- Shadow boxing

Want something a little less breathless?

- Afraid the phone will ring?
- Not sure your boss will understand?
- Fitness Minutes with strengthening and stretching exercises can yield benefits, too!

Strength Building Exercises

- Always start with good posture
 - Head in neutral position
 - Ears over your shoulders
 - Shoulders back and down
 - Abdominals pulled in tight
 - Spine in neutral

Strain and Pain

Improper posture leads to strain and pain.

- Neck pain
- Eye strain
- Headaches
- Low back pain
- Shoulder pain

Neutral spine

Maintaining the four natural curves in the spine:

Cervical spine – neck area

Thoracic spine – upper back

Lumbar spine – lower back

Sacral – tailbone area

To find neutral spine, pull the “tail” under – Bad dog

Then stick the tail out – arch the back

Continue to rock the hips back and forth until you find the center, comfortable position for your spine.

Exercises for the Core

- The “core” refers to the muscles between the hips and the shoulders.
- A strong core helps maintain proper posture and reduce low back pain.
- When working the “core” muscles, focus on the area you are working and attempt to contract the muscle PRIOR to any movement.

Suck It In

- Sit tall with feet firmly planted on the floor
- Inhale fully
- Exhale and draw your belly button to your spine and your ribs towards your hips gently rounding the back.
- Hold for 5-10 seconds

*To increase difficulty, gently press your hands into your thighs as you draw your belly button in.

*To make it even harder, try to maintain a neutral spine while contracting maximally!

Kegal Exercises

- Lifting the pelvic floor engages the deep abdominal muscles creating strength from the inside out.
- Stopping the flow
- Important exercise for pre- and peri-menopausal women
- Combine the Kegal with the “Suck It In” exercise for maximum benefit.

Single Knee Raise / Marching

- Sit toward the front edge of the seat.
- Hands on the desk in front of you or on the sides of your chair.
- Draw your abdominals in but sit tall.
- Inhale and lift the right knee to touch the bottom of the desk.
- Exhale and lift the left knee.
- Repeat 10 times

Twisting Knee Lift

- Sitting up straight and tall, toward the front of a chair, clasp your arms behind your head with your elbows back.
- Tighten your abs as you bring your opposite knee up toward your opposite elbow, rotating through the torso.
- Hold briefly as you exhale.
- Inhale and lower leg, returning to starting position.
- Alternate sides.

Spinal Extension

- Sit tall toward the front of your chair with feet firmly planted on the floor.
- Round your back beginning with your neck and upper back, drawing your chin toward your chest and ribs towards your hips. Feel the stretch from the base of the head to the middle of your back.
- Beginning with the lower back, begin to unfold stacking one vertebra on top of the other until you are sitting tall again.
- Lift the sternum as you inhale.
- Place your hands in the small of your back and attempt to lift up and over your hands.
- Beginning with the head, begin to roll back down.
- Repeat three times

Shoulder Shrugs

- Lift your shoulders up towards your ears.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Press the shoulders down and back and lift the sternum.
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder Retraction

- This exercise strengthens your postural muscles.
- Sit tall in your chair with both feet firmly planted on the floor and your back away from the seat back.
- Arms should be relaxed on armrests.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

Water Bottle Curls

- Sit on the edge of your chair.
- With arms relaxed at your side, tighten your bicep and pull your hand and water bottle toward your shoulder.
- Slowly release back toward the floor.
- Repeat 10 times and then switch arms.

Chair Dips

- Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair with legs together, knees bent, toes lifted and heels digging into floor. Firmly grasp sides of chair seat, straighten arms and slide butt just off the front of the chair so that your upper body is pointing straight ahead.
- Bend elbows and lower body in a straight line. When upper arms are parallel to the floor, push back up to start.
- Challenge yourself: Rather than doing in a "seated" position, straighten out your legs and balance on your heels.
- To avoid shoulder strain, move slowly and do not allow your shoulders to dip below your elbows.

Desk or Wall Push Up

Place toes 2-3 feet away from the wall. Engage your abdominals.

Place hands shoulder width on the wall or desk. Keep the body in a straight line.

Bend the elbows and lower the body toward the wall or desk.

Beginner's Tip: Start with the wall version since it places less stress on the muscles and wrists.

Leg Extensions

- Sit tall with feet on the floor and hands grasping the sides of the chair.
- Inhale and lift your right knee up so the thigh lifts off the chair.
- Exhale and extend your leg, toes pointing toward the ceiling.
- Squeeze the thigh for 3 seconds and then bend knee. Repeat 10 times.
- Repeat on left leg.

Desk Squat

- Do NOT use a chair with wheels for this exercise!
- Keep knees aligned over toes and weight in the heels
- Keep abdominals pulled in tightly as you slowly lower into the seat.
- Once you feel the chair on your rear end, rise back to standing position.
- Use the desk to help support your weight until you gain the strength you need to do this safely.

Gluteal Squeezes

- Stand tall with abdominals pulled in
- Squeeze the gluteals (buttocks) and lengthen the right leg backward.
- Avoid arching and maintain your neutral lumbar (lower back) curve.
- Hold 10 sec.
- Repeat 10 times.

Standing Side Leg Lift

- Stand tall with abdominals engaged and your left hand on the back of your chair.
- Squeeze your gluteals (buttocks) and slide your right leg away from your body.
- Gently lift the leg out to the side and squeeze the hip muscles at the top of the lift.
- Slowly lower back to the starting position.
- Repeat 10 times and then switch sides.

Seated Inner Thigh Squeeze

- Sit tall in your chair with feet firmly planted on the floor. Your legs should be hip distance apart.
- Place your hands on the inside of your thighs, just above the knees.
- Gently press your hands outward while attempting to draw your knees together.
- This exercise can also be done with a squishy ball between the knees.

Hamstring Curl

- Stand behind a chair using the back of the chair for balance. Bend your left leg up to about a ninety degree angle, squeeze the muscle for five seconds, then go back to starting position. Do ten repetitions with each leg.

Heel Raises

- **Strengthens the muscles in the calf and thigh**
- Using a chair, table (or even a shopping cart) for support, stand on one leg with your other foot wrapped behind that ankle.
- Rise up on the ball of your foot, tightening your abs and buttocks.
- Alternate and work on the other leg.

Things to Remember

- Maintain good posture.
- Hold your abs in.
- Don't hold your breath when you are exercising.
- Move slowly with control.
- Tighten the muscles before moving.
- Find creative ways to keep moving.
- Drink plenty of water.

Neck Stretches

Neck Turn

Tuck your chin in, keeping your eyes level, rotate your head so that your looking over 1 shoulder. Hold for 5. Return to start. Do 8 times. Switch sides.

Neck Tilt

With shoulders relaxed, tuck your chin in slightly. Tilt your head so that your ear is over your shoulder. Hold for 5. Return to start. Repeat 8 times. Switch sides

Upper Back Stretch

Sitting tall in chair, extend arms straight out in front of you

Drop chin to chest and draw the sternum (breastbone) toward your spine.

Exhale as you feel the scapula (wing bones) spread across your back

Inhale as you straighten back to neutral spine and open arms out to the side with palms facing up for chest stretch

Chest and Shoulders

Chest Stretch:

- Sit tall in chair with hands behind head, elbows bent
- Lift the sternum (breastbone) and draw the elbows to the rear while squeezing the upper back muscles.

Shoulder Stretch:

- Extend right arm in front of body.
- Use the left arm to gently grab the right arm between the elbow and wrist and pull the straight arm across the body.
- Remember to keep shoulders pulled back and down to help keep the stretch in the shoulder.

Chest Opener

Sit tall in chair with feet on the floor.

Extend the arms out to the side with the palms facing upward

Draw the thumbs back while lifting the sternum toward the ceiling

Avoid arching the back

Sitting Twist

Sit sideways on the chair with your back straight and your feet on the floor.

Grab ahold of the back of the chair and gently twist your torso.

Maintain an erect spine and allow your head to turn to look over your shoulder.

Reposition to the other side and repeat stretch.

Remember to move slowly and maintain a neutral spine.

Do not force this stretch.

Tricep Stretch

Sit tall in the chair with feet planted on the floor.

Bend the left arm and raise the elbow until the upper arm is as close to the ear as possible.

Place your left hand on the left shoulder, as if you were patting yourself on the back.

Gently grab the left elbow with the right arm to intensify the stretch.

If you cannot maintain neutral neck alignment, gently press the left arm from the tricep (back of the upper arm)

Side Stretch

Sit tall in the chair with your feet on the floor.

Extend your right arm overhead.

Reach toward the ceiling feeling as if the arm were extending out from the shoulder.

While pressing your right hip down toward the chair, reach up and over, slightly to the left.

Do not bend. Lift UP and OVER

Hold for 5 seconds

Make sure to breathe deeply and feel the ribs expand

Gluteal Stretch

- Sit on the edge of a chair. Cross one leg by placing your foot onto the opposite knee. Place gentle pressure on the thigh above the knee. (Knee should be facing to the side, parallel to the ground.)
- Gently arch the lower back. To make the stretch stronger, hold that position and lean forward slightly.

Standing Calf and Hip Flexor Stretch

- Stand facing the wall with right foot forward and left foot back.
- Gently press your left heel toward the floor.
- To increase the benefits of the stretch to include the hip flexors, pull the left hip under and draw the abdominals in as you push your back heel to the floor.
- Hold stretch 10 seconds. Do not bounce!
- Repeat on the right side.

Hamstring Stretch

Standing:

- Stand tall and place your foot on a stationary object such as your desk or chair.
- Hinge forward from the hips. (Think about leading with your chin and chest and reaching out over your toes.)
- Maintain neutral spine and a straight leg.
- Hold 10 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.

Sitting

Sit at the edge of your chair with your right leg extended and left leg bent.

Pull the right toes up toward the ceiling and plant the heel into the floor.

Hinge from the hips over your extended leg.

Keep the chin and chest up and lift your tailbone behind for maximum benefit and stretch.

Hold 10 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.

Tips For Stretching

- Move slowly.
- Stop if it hurts.
- Hold the stretches for at least 20 seconds.
- Take a stretch break every hour.
- Make sure to stretch muscles after strengthening them.
- Breathe with the stretch.

Tips for Adding Activity to Your Busy Day

- Do buttock clenches each time the phone rings.
- Walk rather than emailing a message.
- Use the stairs rather than the elevator.
- Park in the lot furthest from your office.
- Stand rather than sit.
- Walk rather than stand.

Employee Wellness

- Join the Employee Health and Wellness program
- Access to Ohlone Fitness Center (Fremont) and Fitness Lab (Newark).
- Take advantage of the wonderful PE classes!
- Free Fitness Assessment and equipment orientation. Help with developing a personal fitness program.

Questions?

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