Exercise at Your Desk

The workout for your workplace

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The average American will sit anywhere from 7.7 to 15 hours a day without moving.
Don’t be a victim of the “Desk Sentence”

• The impact of that much inactivity on human health is catastrophic, significantly increasing our risk of heart disease and diabetes.

• Mayo Clinic has been quoted, “Sitting too long is now becoming equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day”.

• Women who sit seven hours a day or more are 47% more likely to develop major depressive disorder.
The Sitting Disease(s)

- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Back Pain
- Depression
- High Cholesterol
- Overweight/obesity
Americans Struggle to Stand Up

A study published by the National Institutes of Health found that the typical American now requires three distinct attempts to raise themselves from a seated position.
Let’s try it!

Shift forward in the chair and sit in good alignment, lean forward using a hip hinge and stand up, pushing through both legs equally.
Use it or Lose it!

- Biology is a use-it-or-lose-it business

- *Everything* in the human body works on feedback.

- *Nothing* works (or heals) without stimulus.
Research suggests that 30 minutes in the gym may not be enough to counteract the detrimental effects of sitting.
• Frequent exercise reduces your HR from 46% risk rise to only 16% rise

• So you reduce your risk by a large amount by frequent exercise, perhaps just 30 minutes a day
The Great News: Just a little movement goes a long way!

- Individuals who moved just a little bit—who got up from their desks on a frequent basis to get a cup of coffee or take a flight of stairs—significantly improved their health (British Journal of Sports Medicine)

- Only **5 minutes per hour** of activity can reverse the damaging effects of sitting.
Desk Jockey Alternatives
Take 5 Every Hour

- Answer an email in person
- Refill your water
- Make coffee or tea
- Take a quick walk
- Grab something off the printer
- Do some light stretches
- Stand while you talk on the phone
- Have a walking meeting
- “7 Minute Workout” App
Make Movement a Part of Your workday

• Commit to dedicated breaks

• **Just standing or walking** — or even fidgeting or contracting your muscles or performing light stretches can make a difference.

• **Set reminders** on your smart phone or other device to go off every hour

• Stand or pace when you’re talking on the phone

• **Develop a buddy system.** Walk at lunch or have walking meetings.

• Get a pedometer.

• Take the stairs.
Take a Quick Workout Break

- Torso twists 10x
- Shoulder circles 10x
- Stand up out of your chair 10x
- Wall or desk push-ups 10x
What about when I can’t leave my desk?
Benefits of Stretching

• Reduce injury
• Increase alertness
• Reduce stress and tension
• Increase flexibility
• Improves spinal health
• Reduce anxiety
• Improves athletic performance
• Relax
Tips for Stretching

• Consult your physician before starting any new exercise program, especially if you’ve been inactive or are recovering from surgery

• Achieve the most benefits by stretching regularly, at least two to three times a week

• When stretching, move just to the point of tension, stop, and hold that position for 30 seconds or more. Don’t bounce!

• Stretching shouldn’t be painful—it should make you feel relaxed and refreshed

• Keep good form for the best possible effect and to avoid potential injuries

• Relax and continue breathing while you stretch
Neck, Shoulders and Chest:
Five-minute Program
Neck Exercise: Head Tilt

1. Sit all the way back in your chair

2. With your head aligned with your body, slowly push your ear toward your right shoulder—hold for five seconds

3. Tilt your head left in the same manner and hold

4. Repeat three times on each side
Neck Exercise: Chin Tuck

1. Slowly tilt your head forward to stretch the muscles in the back of your neck—hold for 10 seconds

2. Repeat three times
Shoulder Exercise: Shoulder Pull

1. Place your arm across your chest with your opposite hand on your elbow.

2. Gently pull your elbow toward your opposite shoulder—hold for 10 seconds.

3. Repeat on the opposite side.

4. Repeat two times.
Shoulder Exercise: 
Back Scratch

1. Reach your left hand between your shoulder blades until you feel a stretch in the back of your upper arm—hold for 10 seconds

2. Change arms and repeat two times
Shoulder Exercise:
Overhead Stretch/Front Stretch

1. Interlace your fingers with your palms turned upwards above your head while straightening your arms—hold for 10 seconds

2. Lower your arms to the front, parallel with the floor, your fingers laced with your palms facing away from you—stretch at shoulder level for 10 seconds

3. Repeat
Shoulder Exercise:
Shoulder Rolls

1. Slowly roll your shoulders backward in big circles five times

2. Repeat with rolls to the front five times
Chest Exercise: Hands Behind Head

1. With your fingers interlaced behind your head, your elbows straight out to the sides and your upper body aligned, pull your shoulder blades toward each other—hold for 10 seconds.

2. Repeat three times.
Chest Exercise: Chest Stretch

1. Stand by your chair
2. Clasp your hands behind your back with your elbows turned inward
3. Raise your arms toward the ceiling—hold for 10 seconds
4. Repeat three times
Back, Hands and Legs: Five-minute Program
Back Exercise –
Torso Twist

1. Cross your right leg over your left (if comfortable) and rest your left forearm on the outside of your right thigh

2. Apply slow steady pressure with your left forearm against your thigh, twisting your upper body right

3. While holding the stretch, look over your right shoulder—hold for 15 seconds

4. Repeat on the opposite side
Back Exercise –
Back Stretch

1. Sit all the way back in your chair
2. Lean forward from the waist, placing your chest on top of your thighs
3. Rest your hands in front of your feet and put your head between your knees—hold for 30 seconds
4. Place your hands on your thighs and push your upper body to a seated, upright position
5. Repeat several times
Hand Exercise – Hand Press

1. Place your hands together with wrists bent

2. Gently push down toward the floor—hold for 10 seconds.

3. Relax and repeat
Hand Exercise – Wrist Stretch

1. Hold an arm out in front of you

2. With the other hand, grab your knuckles and pull your wrist down—hold for five seconds

3. Change hands and repeat three times
Leg Exercise – Quad Stretch

1. Using your chair* or desk for support, hold the top of your left foot with your hand and gently pull your heel toward your buttocks.

2. Your left knee should remain aligned with your right knee to create a stretch for the front of your thigh. Hold for 15 seconds.

3. Reverse legs and repeat.

*If your chair has rollers, make sure it is anchored against the desk.
Leg Exercise –
Calf Stretch

1. Using a stable chair or desk for support, stand with your body weight over your left leg

2. Extend your right leg in front of your left with your foot flexed (heel extended, toe up)

3. Lean forward slightly from the waist until a slight tension is felt in the back of your upper right leg—hold for 15 seconds

4. Repeat with the other leg
Leg Exercise – Ankle Rolls

1. Using a stable chair or desk for support, lift your right foot from the floor and rotate it eight times to the right and then the left.

2. Repeat for your left foot
Leg Exercise –
Side Bends

1. Place your arms at your sides
2. Bend to the left side while sliding your left hand down your leg (try not to lean forward or back); hold for 15 seconds
3. Repeat on the right side