

Healthy Neck Exercises

1. Good Posture

To improve posture and decrease stress on your head, neck and shoulders, try this exercise. (1) Place two fingers on the top lip and press the head back and up until a slight stretch is felt in the back of the neck. Keep your head level during this moment. (2) Allow the head to glide forward until it becomes comfortable. Do these two or three times each day.



2. Shoulder Roll

A good warm-up also relaxes the shoulder and neck muscles. Make circles with shoulders, roll them to the positions of up, forward, down and back. Now reverse the direction and roll the shoulders to the positions of up, forward, down and back. Make sure your shoulder blades are moving as you do the exercise. Make 5 to 10 circles in each direction.

3. Upper Back and Chest Stretch

Interlace the fingers behind the head. Now press the elbows back and slide shoulder blades together. This exercise will stretch the chest, shoulders and upper back. Hold this stretch for five to ten seconds, and then relax. Do 2-3 repetitions.



4. Chest and Shoulder Stretch

Start by raising both arms so that the hands are next to the ears and the elbows are bent. Now breathe in through your nose and as you exhale, lower your elbows down and back. You should be aiming your elbows at your back pockets and should feel your shoulder blades slide down and together.



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5. Hands Out Front

This stretches the arms and pulls the shoulder blades forward. Interlace your fingers and with your palms facing out, press your hands forward. Tilt the head forward a little while doing this stretch. Hold for 15-20 seconds. Do two or three repetitions.



6. Arm Stretch

Assume the position shown, with your left hand on right elbow. Gently pull the elbow behind the head until a gentle stretch is felt in the shoulder and the back of the right upper arm. Hold this position for 15-20 seconds. Repeat the other side.



7. Neck and Shoulder Exercises

Very gently let the head fall forward and then turn it toward one side into a comfortable stretch. Make sure that you keep the shoulder down on the side where you feel the stretch. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. Repeat to the other side. It may help if you inhale at the start of the exercise and then exhale as you let your head fall forward and to the side. This exercise reduces tension in the muscles of the neck, shoulder & upper back.



8. Stress Reduction

The following technique of breathing with your diaphragm will help reduce muscle tension and stress. Place one hand on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose, expanding your stomach as the air enters. Now blow the air through your mouth. Try that again. Breathe in through your nose and cause the air to go where it can make your hand rise as your stomach expands. Open your lips a little and exhale. Try to do five to ten repetitions of this slowly.



Healthy Back Exercises

1. Walking

2. Body Stretch

The best and easiest activity for a warm-up is just to take a short brisk walk. Two or three times around the worksite or a little warm-up at home before you leave for work should do it. Try this a couple of times during the day, in particular after driving or when you feel it is most appropriate. Don't forget walking to stay in shape on your days off, also.



Raise your arms up over your head and stretch! Breathe in deeply as you are raising your arms, hold it for a few seconds, and then drop your arms down and exhale. The next time you raise your arms, try placing one foot in front of the other and raising up on your toes. Now, reverse the foot placement and stretch again. Notice how much better your balance is with one foot in front of the other-instead of having them side by side. Try this weight shift position of your feet for everything you do-it takes a lot of stress off your back.



3. Chest and Shoulder Stretch

Start by raising both arms so that the elbows are bent. Now breathe in through you nose and as you exhale, lower your elbows at your back pockets and you should feel your shoulder blades slide down and together. Hold this position for a few seconds and then relax. Repeat.



4. Stress Reduction

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Healthy Back Exercises

5. Pelvic Tilt

This exercise strengthens your stomach and improves your posture. Place your hand on your stomach and dig your fingers in a little towards your abdominal muscles. Now tilt your hips so that you are pressing your lower back toward the seat. Hold it for about 5 seconds and then relax. You should be able to feel your stomach muscles tighten up during this “pelvic tilt”. You can also try this exercise while you are standing up-particularly with your back against the wall, or while lying down on the floor or bed.



6. Partial Squat

Strengthens the legs and puts the curve in your lower back. Place your hands on your hips; spread your feet about ten inches apart. Now breathe in through your nose and as you exhale through your mouth, bend your knees until your heels start to come up off the floor. Hold this position for 10-15 seconds and then return to the starting position. It is a great exercise for anyone that has to sit a lot during their work day. Not only is it good for warm-up activity- it can help reduce fatigue in your back throughout the day.



7. Hamstring Stretch

Do this exercise if you sit or use your legs a lot during the day. It stretches your leg and makes the back stronger. Place one foot up on a chair or step. If just placing foot up is stretching the back of the leg, bend your knees a little to ease the tension or place your foot on a lower surface. Now breathe in and as you exhale, slowly lean forward, bending at the hip-not at the lower back (this is extremely important), until you feel a moderate stretch in the back of your leg. Hold this position for a slow count to thirty. Now place your foot down then repeat the stretch on the other side.



8. Hip Stretch

Sitting a lot can cause your hip muscles to tighten up and put strain there, and on your lower back. Comfortably place a knee on something about twenty-four inches above the ground. A chair seat may be appropriate. Place one knee on the surface that you have chosen for support. Put the opposite foot out in front with the knee slightly bent. Hold with one hand, on to something for support, if you need it, and then slowly bend the forward knee to about a ninety degree bend. You should feel the stretch in the hip of the leg in the chair. Hold for a slow count of 30 and then return to a standing position. Do two for each leg.

