

Stress Break Stretches- 1st break



Undo the effects sitting all day has on your body and your posture by doing these stretches every day. Do 10-15 reps of each. You can do a stretching routine like this one that includes all the stretches or pick a couple to do at a time spread out throughout the day. Try setting reminders in your outlook.

1. **Deep Breathes**- arms up in the front, inhale; down to the side on the exhale
 - a. Even our breathing and respiratory muscles become weakened after sitting all day. Poor posture can lead to shallow breathing and this can have an adverse effect on all the organs in the body, especially our digestive system. Which can lead to gastro problems like indigestion. Practice this deep breathing more throughout your day.
2. **Shoulder Rolls back**- to loosen up those shoulders where so many commonly get tight and get those knots.
3. **Neck stretches**- head to shoulder and chin to shoulder
 - a. The neck takes on a lot of stress. Tense shoulders can lead to stiffer neck muscles which can cause neck pain and headaches. This slow movement through these stretches is to get the blood flowing, loosening up your muscles and your joints.
4. **Spine**- first arching the back, using the hands on the thighs for support, come up slow and place hands on low back to arch back slightly.
 - a. We are going to undo some of the stress on the spine by stretching and moving it in all four planes.
 - b. Remember to go slow and don't force any stretches. If you have any back injuries or pain you may want to only stretch forward or just go to your own comfort zone
 - c. If you want to go a little deeper you can reach towards the floor on the first part
5. **Side Reach**- reaching overhead to the side, lean hip into it to go a little deeper
6. **Side Reach Across**- twisting the spine, move your hip and foot with the movement.
 - a. Can do these all on one side or alternate
7. **Hip Flexors**- Stand with feet shoulder distance apart, then take a step straight back. Reach arms straight up in front of you, drop the hip a little lower, then come back down. Do same thing reaching arm overhead and to the side (same arm as back leg). Repeat same thing reaching across.
 - a. Can hold on the desk or chair for balance
 - b. Hip flexors get tight from sitting all day, these helps loosen up and keep the hips safe and functional.
8. **Sword Draw and Reach Back**- feet wide, draw sword and reach back to opposite side
 - a. These next stretches are designed to strengthen muscles of the upper back that get weakened from that forward position at desk and to loosen up the muscles in the front of the body that get tightened.
9. **Chain Breakers**- open chest, squeeze muscles in between shoulder blades and hold for count of 3. Don't tense the hands or squeeze the hands.
10. **Scapula Strengtheners**-hands by side, thumbs pointing forward. Squeeze shoulder blades and open palms. Hold 3 seconds.
11. **Double Chins**- Hands behind head, push head against hands hold 3 seconds.