



Occupational Health
Clinics for Ontario
Workers Inc.

Centres de santé
des travailleurs (ses)
de l'Ontario Inc.

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Exercises at your Workstation

Do you have a job where you sit (desk job), or stand for long periods (cashiers, bank tellers, etc.)? Do you suffer from muscular aches and pains? Repetitive movements or static positions that cause muscles to become tired or stiff. It is important to include stretching breaks as part of a normal workday. These breaks are not only good for overall health, but they can alleviate discomfort and pain, while releasing a “feel good” chemical called endorphins. In addition, exercise breaks can decrease fatigue, headaches and stress. Exercises can be performed right at your workstation.

Prior to beginning exercise, it is important to control breathing. Simply take a deep breath in through your nose, forcing your abdomen to expand. Then slowly let the air out through your mouth. Pause, relax and repeat several times.

Stretching should include simple stretches for all major muscle groups such as the arms, legs, chest, neck and back. Example stretches include hugging yourself, stretching the arms up overhead and across the body, bending the neck off to the sides, reaching down to touch the toes, etc. Stretches should be held for a count of 10. Take a deep breath and repeat each stretch 2-3 times. Try to stretch a little further every time. Never bounce when stretching. The exercises can be done separately throughout the day.

Ten minutes of your time is all it takes to alleviate the stress on your entire body. The best option for relieving pain and discomfort is to remember to change positions regularly. For example, if you need to sit for your job, get up and walk around. Alternatively, sit if you stand for long periods. For more detailed information, visit www.ohcow.on.ca/clinics/sudbury.

Shirley Jodouin is with the Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers Inc. (OHCOW). If you have an occupational health topic you would like addressed in a future column, contact OHCOW at (705) 523-2330.