

STRETCH and STRENGTHEN at your desk



Fitting Exercise In

- Schedule workout time and treat it as importantly as a meeting with your CEO.
- Do some chores. Mow the lawn or rake the leaves for 20 minutes. Housework burns calories and enables you to get the chores done!
- Walk/run while you are waiting for the laundry to be ready.
- Move your body while dinner is cooking. Walk/run on the treadmill or turn on your favorite exercise video.
- Walk/run the dog, increasing time and speed each time. This will also give your dog good exercise.
- Ride a bike to the store with a backpack if you only need to pick up a few things.
- Wake up 30 minutes earlier (or don't hit the snooze twice) and get the blood flowing with an early morning routine (jump rope, walk, hike, run)
- Putting the alarm clock on the other side of the room will force you to get up out of bed.
- Set up a treadmill or stationary bike in front of the television to enhance your exercise enjoyment.
- If you travel, go to the hotel gym and then reward yourself with a dip in the pool.
- Work out a schedule with your neighbors to watch each other's children for a half hour on alternate days, helping both families get into a consistent exercise routine.
- Play games with your kids. Shoot some hoops, play some hopscotch or toss a ball.

Common Reasons to Skip Exercise

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| • I don't have the time | • It's too hot or too cold | • I need to do housework |
| • I need to go shopping | • I'm too tired | • I'm in good enough shape |
| • I'm on my feet all day | • I'm going to be traveling | • It takes too much time away from my kids |
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Stretch at your Desk

- **Eye stretches:** Keeping your head straight, look out of the corners of your eye to the right, then to the left, then down and finally up. Don't move your head just your eyeballs. Don't hurry. Incorporate relaxation breathing. (Example: Breathe in deeply through your nose as you look right, breathe out through your mouth as you bring your eyes back to forward or neutral position). Keep your neck and shoulder relaxed throughout the stretching session.
- **Wrist stretches:** Bend your right wrist down while applying light tension to the top of the right hand with your other hand if needed. Then, turn the right arm so the right palm is facing up. Bend the fingers down and away from the palm with the fingers open and relaxed. You can apply a light tension with your other hand across the base of the fingers and upper palm area for more stretch. Repeat with the left hand and wrist.
- **Thumb stretches:** Turn palm up. Place one thumb on top of the other. Stretch one thumb, then the other.
- **Hand and finger stretches:** Make a fist, one at a time, and hold it tightly for 2-3 seconds. Then open your fingers wide and stretch your hand and finger muscles like a cat's paw.
- **Shoulder shrugs:** Shrug or lift the tops of your shoulders up toward your ears. Hold the position for 2-3 seconds and then relax your shoulders and lower to the starting position.
- **Shoulder rolls:** Sit or stand maintaining good posture. Roll your shoulders backwards and hold. Reach behind the lower back with both arms and interlocking the fingers will allow for a fuller stretch of the chest area. Roll the shoulders forward; extend the arms out in front at shoulder level with the fingers interlocked and palms facing out. This will stretch the upper back.
- **Neck stretch # 1:** To stretch the muscles that rotate, flex and extend your neck, slowly turn your head as far to the right as is comfortable and hold. Repeat to the left. Next, drop your chin gently toward your chest. Do not push on your head with your hands!
- **Neck stretch # 2:** To stretch the muscles that move your neck laterally, slowly lower the right side of your chin toward your right collar bone and shoulder area. Repeat to the left.
- **Arms/upper side stretch:** Interlace fingers then turn palms upwards above your head as you straighten your arms. Think of elongating your arms as you feel a stretch through arms and upper sides of rib cage. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Hold only stretches that feel releasing. Do three times.
- **A stretch for the side of hip, lower and middle of back:** Sit with left leg bent over right leg, then rest elbow or forearm of right arm on the outside of the upper thigh of the left leg. Now apply some controlled, steady pressure toward the right with the elbow or forearm. As you do this look over your left shoulder to get the stretch feeling. Do both sides. Hold for 15 seconds.
- **Hamstring stretch:** To stretch your hamstrings (upper back of the leg) while seated, sit back in a chair with the lower back supported. Place your hands under the right knee area and slowly lift up the leg with knee bent toward the chest. Repeat with the left leg.
- **Lower leg and ankle stretch:** While seated, first extend or point the right toes and foot straight ahead. Hold the stretch (you may place the upper most toe area on the floor for support). Then, place the back of the right heel on the floor and pull toes and upper foot toward the front of the lower leg and hold for a calf stretch. Repeat with the left lower leg and foot area.
- **Quadriceps:** Standing next to your chair, lift the leg closest to the chair off the ground, holding your ankle to your buttock with your knee pointed toward the floor, hips forward and level. To stretch deeper, move knee backward, push hip forward. Hold stretch. Repeat with opposite side.



Fitting exercise into your workday

- Make use of your lunch break. Play a quick game of racquetball, walk the stairs, make a speedy gym visit, go for a jog or take a brisk walk.
- Stretch at your desk. This reduces muscle tension, gets your circulation moving and prepares you for more strenuous activity later.
- Grab your water bottle or resistance bands and do some strength exercises at your desk.

Stretching guidelines

- Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing.
- Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-20 seconds.
- After holding the stretch, you can move a little farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. Hold for another 5-20 seconds.
- Keep your breathing slow, deep, and relaxed.

Legs

- **Chair squat:** While sitting, lift butt off the seat and hover over chair for 2-3 seconds. Stand up and repeat 10 times. Use your resistance band for more challenge by looping the band under your feet while holding the ends in your hands.
- **Leg press:** While seated, place the center of the band under your left foot, grasping each of the ends in each hand. Keep your right foot on the ground. Keeping your elbows bent and at your sides, extend the left leg by pushing the foot out and away from your body. Return to start position of bent knee and bent hip on the left leg (upper leg/knee is off of the chair). Complete 10 repetitions on each leg.

Chest & back

- **Chest press:** Place the band across the back of your shoulder blades, grasping the ends with both hands. Extend the arms forward at chest height, pressing away from the body. Control the resistance band as you move your hands back towards the body, elbows at right angles. Complete 10 repetitions.
- **Lat pull down:** Grasp the ends of the resistance band with each hand. Raise hands in the air above head, arms straight. Bending the elbows toward the floor and your hands wide, pull down and wide on the band, letting the band go behind your head as you pull. Return to start. Repeat 10 times.

Shoulders

- **Lateral raises:** Standing, step on one end of the resistance band with one foot. Grab the other end of the resistance band with one hand. Keeping a slight bend in the arm and palm facing the ground, raise the hand up and out to the side of the body, parallel to the floor. Return to start with hand at side. Do the other arm/shoulder. Complete 10 repetitions on each side.
- **Front raises:** Standing, step on one end of the resistance band with one foot. Grab the other end of the resistance band with one hand. Keeping a slight bend in the arm and palm facing the ground, raise the hand up and out in front of the body, parallel to the floor. Return to the start with hand at side. Complete 10 repetitions on each side.



Working with resistance bands

- Maintain a good posture. Keep your wrists straight and in line with your elbows.
- Breathe normally.
- Use controlled movements.
- Try to maintain the natural width of the band to keep it from digging into your hands or sliding up your legs.
- You can always increase resistance on the exercises by shortening the distance between your hands on the band.

Biceps & triceps

- **Bicep curls:** Sitting, place the middle of the band under your feet, holding ends in both hands. Begin with palms facing inward, thumbs up and slowly bend elbows and bring forearms to the shoulders. Lower back to starting position. Make sure you keep your wrists straight and keep the elbows stable. Repeat 10 times.
- **Tricep kickbacks:** Sitting, place the center of the resistance band under your feet. Grasp the ends of the resistance band with each hand. Leaning forward slightly, slowly tighten the back of your arm and push your forearm down and back until arm is straight (not locked!). Make sure your elbow is stable and doesn't move throughout the movement. Slowly return to the starting position with hands at the sides of the legs. Repeat 10 times.
- **Tricep extension:** Hold band in left hand behind your back and grasp the other end of band in the right hand. Begin with arm straight up over head, palm facing out. Slowly lower arm to 90 degrees until forearm is behind the head. Squeezing the triceps, straighten arm without locking it. Your left arm stays stable and provides the resistance by pulling the resistance band tight. Make sure your elbow is stable and doesn't move throughout the movement. Complete 10 repetitions on each arm.
- **Dips:** Make sure your desk or chair is stable and place hands next to hips. Move hips in front of desk or chair and bend elbows, lowering body until elbows are at 90 degrees. Complete 10 repetitions.

Standing leg exercises

- **Standing hip flexion:** Stand with abs in, spine straight. Bend left knee and lift left leg up until level with hip. Hold for 2 seconds, repeat other side. Complete 10 repetitions with each leg.
- **Side leg lift:** In same starting position as above, lift left leg straight out to the side a few inches off the floor. Hold for 2 seconds, repeat on the other side. Complete 10 repetitions with each leg. Use your resistance band for more challenge: Tie the ends together and place around your ankles while doing the exercise.

Front raise, overhead press & bicep curl (without band)

- **Front raise:** Sit in chair, abs in and spine straight. Hold water bottle in right hand and raise arm up to shoulder level. Hold 2 seconds and repeat other side. Complete 10 repetitions with each arm.
- **Overhead press:** Hold water bottle in right hand, elbow bent, and extend arm overhead. Repeat other side. Complete 10 repetitions with each arm.
- **Bicep curl:** Hold water bottle in right hand and, with abs in and spine straight, curl bottle towards shoulder. Repeat other side. Complete 10 repetitions with each arm.

Abs

- **Pelvic tilt:** Pull in your tummy (navel to spine, press your low back into the chair), tense and tighten up your ab muscles; hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 15 times.
- **Crunch:** Sit on the edge of chair, arms extending in front. Keeping back straight, contract the abs and slowly lower torso towards back of chair. Hold 2-3 seconds and repeat 15 times.
- **Curls:** Cross arms over chest and sit up straight. Contract abs (as in Pelvic Tilt above) and curl shoulder towards hips, pulling abs in. Hold for 2 seconds and repeat 15 times.
- **Knees to chest:** Sit upright in a chair. Hold on to the arms of the chair or a point under the seat of the chair. With your feet together and knees bent, lift your knees toward your chest while contracting your abdominal muscles. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 15 times. Remember – navel to spine.



Putting it all together

- Breathe while you stretch and strengthen
- Don't rush through the exercises
- Take your band with you when you travel so you can still exercise on the road
- Have fun! Exercising can be a great form of relaxation.



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