

Desk stretches: Video collection

Desk stretches help prevent pain and stiffness. See how they're done.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

Do you work at a desk all day? To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try simple desk stretches.

The problem: Prolonged sitting

If you work at a desk or computer for long stretches of time, you might place excessive stress on certain muscles. As a result, you're likely to get stiff and sore — unless you take frequent breaks for physical activity.

The solution: Fitness breaks

Breaking up your workday with stretches and other physical activities can help keep you comfortable while you work. You can stretch while you're seated at your desk or standing in your workspace. You might even be able to stretch while you're participating in a conference call or other workplace activities. You don't need special equipment to stretch, and you won't break a sweat — yet the results can be powerful.

Watch these videos on specific desk stretches to understand proper form and technique.

[Video: Neck stretches for the workplace](#)

- Standing for long periods of time or sitting at a desk all day can take a toll on your neck. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try simple neck stretches throughout the day.
- For the first stretch, lower your chin to your chest while keeping your shoulders nice and straight. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the back of your neck. Relax and slowly lift your chin to the starting position.
- Next, rotate your head to one side while keeping your shoulders nice and straight. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the side of your neck and your shoulder. Relax and slowly return to the starting position. Turn your head to the other side and repeat the stretch.
- Next, tilt your head so that you're moving your ear toward your shoulder. Don't bring your shoulder up to your ear. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the side of your neck. Relax and slowly return to the starting position. Tilt your head to the other side and repeat the stretch.
- When you're stretching, keep it gentle. Breathe freely as you hold each stretch, and be careful not to bounce. Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.

[Video: Forearm stretches for the workplace](#)

- Working on a computer all day can cause soreness in your forearms, wrists and hands. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try simple forearm stretches and wrist stretches throughout the day.
- For the first stretch, lift one of your arms and hold it comfortably in front of you — palm facing down. Bend your hand downward and gently pull it toward you using your other hand. You'll feel tension in the outside part of your elbow and forearm. This area is where you may

experience repetitive strain due to typing on a computer. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other hand.

- Next, lift one of your arms and hold it comfortably in front of you — palm facing up. Bend your hand downward and gently pull it toward you using your other hand. You'll feel tension in your forearm and elbow. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other hand.
- Next, extend your arms in front of you with your hands in fists. Rotate your wrists outward, then inward in a circular motion. This stretch can improve blood flow to your hands.
- When you're stretching, keep it gentle. Breathe freely as you hold each stretch and be careful not to bounce. Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.

[Video: Upper body stretches for the workplace](#)

- Standing or sitting for long periods of time can make areas of your lower body sore. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try these stretches.
- For the first stretch, bring one of your knees toward your chest. Use your hands to grab the back of your thigh and gently pull it toward you. Keep your back straight, being careful not to lean forward. You'll feel tension in your lower back and the upper part of your buttock. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other leg.
- Next, position yourself on the edge of your chair and straighten out one of your legs in front of you, resting your heel on the floor. Bend forward at the hip until you feel a stretching sensation at the back of your thigh. Be sure to keep your back straight. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other leg.
- When doing seated stretches, it's safest to use a chair that doesn't have wheels. Breathe freely as you hold each stretch, and be careful not to bounce. Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.

[Video: Seated stretches for the workplace](#)

- Standing or sitting for long periods of time can make areas of your lower body sore. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try these stretches.
- For the first stretch, bring one of your knees toward your chest. Use your hands to grab the back of your thigh and gently pull it toward you. Keep your back straight, being careful not to lean forward. You'll feel tension in your lower back and the upper part of your buttock. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other leg.
- Next, position yourself on the edge of your chair and straighten out one of your legs in front of you, resting your heel on the floor. Bend forward at the hip until you feel a stretching sensation at the back of your thigh. Be sure to keep your back straight. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position and repeat the stretch with your other leg.
- When doing seated stretches, it's safest to use a chair that doesn't have wheels. Breathe freely as you hold each stretch, and be careful not to bounce. Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.

[Video: Standing stretches for the workplace](#)

- Standing or sitting for long periods of time can make areas of your body sore. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try these stretches.
- For the first stretch, place one hand on a chair or desk for stability. Grab one of your ankles and bring it up toward your buttock. You'll feel tension in the front of your thigh. Remember to maintain an upright position, keeping your back straight and your knees parallel to one another. If you have a hard time grabbing your ankle, grab your pant leg instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat the stretch with your other leg.
- Next, stand up straight and fold your arms in front of your chest, rotating your trunk in one direction. Keep your hips facing forward and your feet hip-width distance apart. You'll feel tension in your back. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and return to the starting position. Rotate your trunk in the other direction and repeat.
- When you're stretching, keep it gentle. Breathe freely as you hold each stretch, and be careful not to bounce. Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.