

**DO YOU
sit at
a desk
all day?**

**Does your 9 to 5 leave no
time for structured exercise..?**

STAYING healthy AT WORK IS EASIER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK:

TRY BUILDING THE FOLLOWING DESK-BASED EXERCISES INTO YOUR WORKING DAY.

Current UK exercise guidelines recommend adults aged 19-64 take at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity each week (aiming to be active every day).

These simple stretches can help ease the aches and pains associated with sitting for long periods, but it's important to combine them with regular physical activity. Moving more throughout the day can help keep your weight at a healthy level and limit your chances of developing a number of serious illnesses.

Physiotherapy can help you stay healthy and active. Visit www.csp.org.uk/your-health You can be referred to a physiotherapist by your GP. Or, in some places, you can contact your local NHS physiotherapy department yourself. To find your local private physiotherapy practitioner visit www.physio2u.co.uk For more information about the work of physiotherapists in occupational health, contact the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics www.acpohe.org.uk

perfect posture



perfect posture

Good posture is important for keeping your back, neck and other joints healthy. Try the following tips to improve your posture – especially if slouching at your desk has become a habit.

- **Sit with your bottom** right at the back of your seat and rest against the back of your chair for support
- **Rest your forearms** on your desk with your elbows at a 90° angle
- **Relax your shoulders**, don't allow them to elevate or round
- **Make sure both** of your feet are flat on the floor, and your knees are level with your hips
- **Adjust your chair** and use a footstool or other support if needed
- **Imagine there is** a piece of string coming through your body and out of the top of your head to the ceiling. This will prevent slumping and help keep you upright.

WALL-PRESS



ILLUSTRATION: MARC GOODERHAM

WALL-PRESS

Press-ups are a great way to build some fitness training into your workday. All you need is a flat surface – and it doesn't have to be the office floor:

- **Stand with your feet** hip-width apart. Stretch out your arms and rest your palms against the wall at shoulder-height and slightly wider than shoulder-width apart
- **Take a couple of tiny** steps back, engage your tummy muscles, and slowly bend your arms at the elbows. Keep your back and neck straight and look at the wall in front of you
- **Lower yourself** until you are a couple of inches away from the wall, then push yourself back up to your starting position
- **Make sure you lead** with your chest so your arms are doing the work. Do not allow your back to arch
- **Aim for three sets** of ten press-ups. To make this exercise more challenging, move your legs further back.

THE Sit-Stretch



ILLUSTRATION: MARC GOODERHAM

THE Sit-Stretch

Long periods of sitting with your knees and hips flexed can cause the muscles at the back of your legs (hamstrings) to shorten and become tight. Address this problem with the following stretch:

- **Perch on the edge** of your seat and stretch your right leg out in front of you
- **Rest your heel** on the floor with your foot pointing up
- **Lean forward** slightly from your hips and look straight ahead. You should feel a gentle stretch but no pain along the back of your right leg
- **Hold the stretch** for 20 seconds, repeat three times and then swap legs.

THE LEG-UP

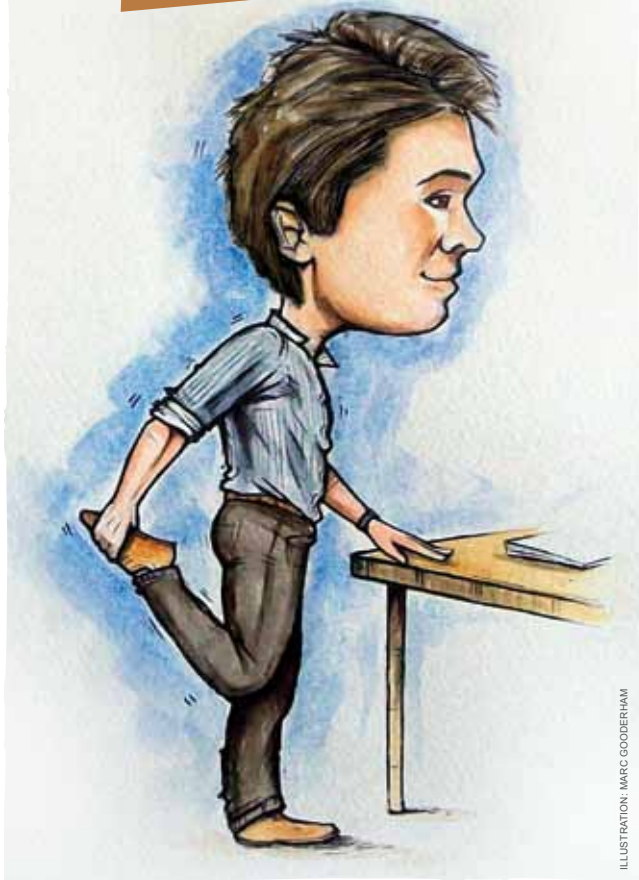


ILLUSTRATION: MARC GOODERHAM

THE LEG-UP

Spending too much time sitting can make the muscles on the front of your thighs (quadriceps) tight. Over time, this can leave you at greater risk of injury to your knees and lower back. Try the following to stretch out your quads:

- **Stand in front** of your desk and place your left hand on it for balance
- **Standing on** your left leg, raise your right heel towards your right buttock
- **Grab hold** of your right foot with your right hand. You should feel a stretch along the front of your thigh
- **Hold the stretch** for 20 seconds, repeat three times and then switch legs.

CHair twist



ILLUSTRATION: MARC GOODERHAM

CHAIR twist

Regular movement can help ease back problems and other aches and pains. Nothing beats getting away from your desk for a walk, but when that's not possible mobilise your spine and reduce feelings of stiffness in your back with this simple stretch:

- **Sit slightly forward** in your chair and rotate your head and upper body to the right
- **Take your left arm** and cross it over your body so that it meets your chair's right armrest. If this feels difficult, rest your left hand on the side of your right knee
- **Rest your right hand** on the top of the back of your chair and keep your feet flat on the ground while performing this stretch
- **Hold this position** for 20 seconds, repeat three times and then switch sides.

Chest stretch



ILLUSTRATION: MARC GOODERHAM

Chest stretch

Working on a keyboard with arms and hands outstretched can lead to rounded shoulders and a slumped posture. Your chest muscles can become tight and the muscles between your shoulder blades might be underused. The following stretch will help correct this muscle imbalance:

- **Sit forward** from the back of your chair
- **With your thumbs** pointing towards the ceiling, open your arms out to the side until you feel a stretch in the front of your chest. Ensure your shoulders are back and down
- **Aim to switch on** the muscles between your shoulder blades by gently drawing them together. You should not feel pain or tingling in your arms
- **Hold the stretch** for 20 seconds and repeat three times.