

# Get fit ... at your desk!

## EXERCISE TIPS FOR IN THE OFFICE

**If you're sitting at your desk all day, you will have even more energy to exercise later, right?** Wrong. Our bodies weren't meant to sit from nine to five. In fact, the more we sit, the more tired we become. When you add in other "sitter's risks" like weight gain, carpal tunnel and back pain, there's no time like the present to get moving.

It's hard to imagine ... but there are many exercises that you can do right at your desk! Try out any, or all, of the 10 valuable tips below to get you moving while you're on the clock.

### 1. FINGER TAPS

This simple hand exercise can help your fingers move better. Touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger, making the circle as round as you can. Straighten your fingers in between touching each finger.

### 2. "SWEEP AWAY" THE TENSION

Once or twice an hour, try releasing some "typing tension." Start with your elbows tucked in and your palms facing each other. Then bend your wrists forward, bringing your fingers toward each other. Now bend your wrists back so that your palms face the front. Do this five to seven times.

### 3. TYPIST'S WARM-UP

Your body needs a stretch before it works — and so do your fingers. So try this move before you start typing to help get your blood flowing to your hand and finger muscles. First, make fists with both hands, then relax. Repeat five or six times. Now wiggle your fingers up and down and rub your hands together, like you're putting on lotion.

### 4. SHOULDER ROLLS

Roll your way to relaxation. Here's how: Sit or stand with your back straight, and lift your shoulders as high as you can. Now bring them forward, and push them down. Then pull your shoulders back and return to starting position. Repeat in the opposite direction. You can do this with one shoulder or both.

### 5. SIT AND REACH

This quick stretch can help relieve tension in your middle back from sitting for long periods. Move your chair away from your desk so you have room to stretch. Interlock your fingers, turn your palms outward and extend your arms away from your body as far as you can. Keeping your back straight and arms parallel to the desktop, turn your shoulders to the right and return to the center. Turn your shoulders to the left, and then return to the center.



**BE WELL** — Don't be a sitter! Get your coworkers to "walk and talk" for your next meeting.

**Get moving!** Resolution to make lifestyle changes at home and at work, no matter how small, will make a big difference.

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## 6. BALLET BENDS

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Grab the back of your chair, and stand with your feet comfortably apart, your toes turned slightly outward. Now keeping your back straight, *slowly* bend your knees over your toes. (Don't extend your knees past your toes or you'll stress your knees.) Straighten by pushing up through your feet. This exercise will increase the blood flow to your legs and increase flexibility.

## 7. LEG ROTATIONS

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Stand, and hold on to a chair for balance. Bend and raise one knee. With your dangling foot, make small clockwise circles, then reverse and circle counter clockwise. Then try it on your other side. Not only does this exercise get you out of your chair, it helps with coordination!

## 8. SHAKE IT OUT

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...and shake the stress away! Imagine the way a dog shakes off after getting wet. Now shake your body just like that wet dog — your arms, hands, legs, feet, head and shoulders.

## 9. DEEP BREATHING

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When we're stressed, our breathing is shallow and rapid. So stop stress in its tracks with deep, slow breathing. Just close your eyes and breathe out slowly and completely through your mouth. Feel your stomach "cave in" as you breathe out. Now breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Feel your stomach contract as you breathe in. Hold for five seconds, then exhale and begin the cycle again.

## 10. RELAX AND ROLL

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Help release neck tension by relaxing your shoulders and let your head roll forward, chin to chest. Slowly rotate your head in a circle without straining your neck. Relax, and rotate in the opposite direction. Try not to raise your shoulders.

Source: Desk Exercises. Aetna IntelliHealth. Accessed August 14, 2009 at [www.aetnaintelihealth.com](http://www.aetnaintelihealth.com).

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