Sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain. Take a few minutes to do a series of stretches and your whole body will feel better. It is helpful to stretch spontaneously throughout the day, stretching any area of the body that feels tense. This will help greatly in reducing and controlling unwanted tension and pain.

(Most of these stretches may be done standing or sitting. When standing remember to keep your knees slightly bent to protect your back and to give you better balance.)

**How to stretch**

1. (fig.1) Separate and straighten your fingers until tension of a stretch is felt (fig.1). Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for 10 seconds (fig.2) Repeat stretch in fig.1 once more.

2. (fig.2) With fingers interlaced behind head, keep elbows straight out to side with upper body in a good aligned position. Pull your shoulder blades toward each other to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this feeling of mild tension for 8–10 seconds, then relax. Do several times.

3. Shoulder Shrug: Raise the top of your shoulders towards your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3–5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward. Do this 2–3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.

4. **Ergonomic Workout**

   - Stretch to a point where you feel a mild tension and relax as you hold the stretch.
   - The feeling of stretch tells you whether you are stretching correctly or not.
   - If you are stretching correctly, the feeling of stretch should slightly subside as you hold the stretch.
   - Do not bounce.
   - The long-sustained, mild stretch reduces unwanted muscle tension and tightness.
   - Stretches should be held generally for 5–30 seconds, depending on what stretch you are doing.

5. Start with head in a comfortable aligned position. Slowly tilt head to left side to stretch muscles on the right side of neck. Hold stretch for 5–10 seconds. Feel a good, even stretch. Do not overstretch. Then tilt head to right side and stretch. Do 2–3 times each side.

6. From a stable, aligned position turn your chin toward your left shoulder to create a stretch on the right side of your neck. Hold for 5–10 seconds. Repeat, each side twice.

Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional before starting a stretching or exercise program.

The shaded areas are those areas where you will most likely feel the stretch.

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Gently tilt your head forward to stretch the back of the neck. Hold for 5–10 seconds. Repeat 2–3 times. Hold only tensions that feel good. Do not stretch to the point of pain.

Standing with knees slightly bent, place your palm on lower back just above your hips, fingers pointing downward. Gently push your palms forward to create an extension in the lower back. Hold a comfortable stretch for 1–10 seconds. Repeat twice. Use this stretch after sitting an extended period of time.

To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms, your head resting on your hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the floor in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the floor and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 10–30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

Standing with knees slightly bent, place your palm on lower back just above your hips, fingers pointing downward. Gently push your palms forward to create an extension in the lower back. Hold a comfortable stretch for 1–10 seconds. Repeat twice. Use this stretch after sitting an extended period of time.

Interlace fingers then turn palms upward 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. Do three times.

Hold right elbow with left hand, then gently pull elbow behind head until an easy tension stretch is felt. Hold 10–15 seconds. Do not overstretch. Repeat for other side.

Interlace fingers, then straighten arms out in front of you, palm facing away from you. Hold stretch for 10–20 seconds. Do at least two times.

Hold onto the back of your upper leg just above the knee. Gently pull bent leg toward your chest until you feel an easy stretch. Hold from 10–30 seconds at easy stretch tension. Do both sides.

Sit with left leg bent over right leg and rest right hand on the outside of the upper thigh of the left leg. Now apply some controlled, steady pressure toward the right with your hand. As you do this look over your left shoulder to get the stretch feeling. Do both sides. Hold for 10–15 seconds.