

Exercise for Computer Workers

Written by: Dr. Jamey Gordon, DPT



SCREEN SAVER

Advice for frequent computer users.

Let's face it, gone are the days when we toiled all day long just to eke out a living working the land with our bare hands. We have automated washing machines, microwave ovens and prepackaged everything! This change in culture has also changed our jobs. Millions of people now spend the greater part of their work day at a desk in front of a computer screen. In fact, if you are reading this, you are most likely doing just that, looking at a screen.

Don't get me wrong, the technological medium between you and me is wonderful. However, just as hard labor has its risks, sitting all day carries its own set of health setbacks. But the effects of sitting at work are not noticeable immediately. They accumulate over time and, therefore, take time to overcome. As with many exercise routines, the exercises I will suggest for those who frequently engage in computer interaction, will be equally as good for overcoming pain and injury as for preventing the pain.

Some considerations for exercises if you are a frequent computer user are to maintain posture, improve and maintain neck and shoulder flexibility and to decrease physical stress. One of the things that you can and should add to the exercises we will be describing is to get up and walk. Walking for 30-60 minutes per day at least 4 days a week is recommended to keep your cardiovascular system working well. Since you are not up moving around during the day, make sure you get your blood pumping for a prolonged period of time.

Physical stress tends to build in the neck and shoulders. This stress can cause headaches and excessive stiffness on the front of the shoulders, in the forearms and top of the neck at the back of the head. Likewise, weakness in the deep neck muscles and muscles between the shoulder blades is very common.

While doing your daily work, body positioning is crucial. Some principles to think about while at your desk are to position yourself so that you can keep your neck and shoulders relaxed and your feet flat on the floor (or foot stand, if needed). Think 90-degree angles; your hips should be at 90 degrees in relation to the thighs, knees should be bent 90 degrees and elbows should be at about 90 degrees while typing or using a mouse. Next, support your arms and spine like a racecar driver. Your elbows should be held easily by the arm rests of the chair. When the arms have to come down to reach the rests, it pulls the whole body down, placing incredible strain on the neck and shoulders.

These 5 exercises are intended to address areas that typically get out of balance when working in front of a computer screen. They include strengthening exercises that can be done without weight equipment, postural correction exercises and some stretching. In addition to the five exercises on the accompanying sheet, make sure your chair and monitor positioning are appropriate.

5 Exercises for Computer Workers.

1. Forearm stretching. Helps prevent conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome.
2. Neck stretching. Helps prevent headaches and keep the deep, supportive neck muscles strong.
3. Wall slides. Stretches upper shoulders and mid-back and keeps the postural muscles strong.
4. Heel raises. Keeps circulation going to the feet and lower legs.
5. Seated knee extension. Helps with flexibility in the backs of the legs and strength of the front of the thighs.

Disclaimer:

This website and its pages are based upon the opinions of our physicians and other professionals. The information on our website is general health information and is not to be considered as medical advice. The information is in no way intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the experience of Pure Health MD's professional contributors.

www.PureHealthMD.com

Copyright 2008 Pure Health Corporation Fort Wayne IN USA