

Desk stretches to ease aches and pains

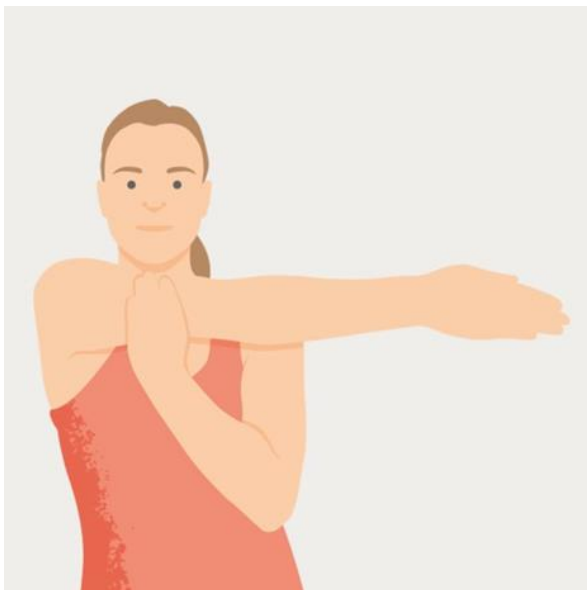
If you are working from home during the lockdown, using some sort of temporary workstation, you may not have the same supportive setup that you would in an office. You may find that your shoulders, neck or back are hurting after long days spent sitting down awkwardly. But, it doesn't have to be this way: you may find that some of these exercises can help ease the strain.

1. Seated spinal rotation



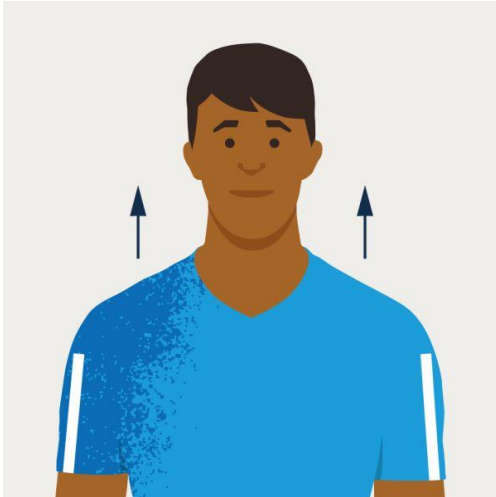
- While seated, cross your arms over your chest.
- Grab your shoulders.
- Rotate your upper body from the waist, turning gently from left to right as far as you can.
- You should feel a tension on both side of your lower back as it stretches out.

2. Posterior shoulder stretch



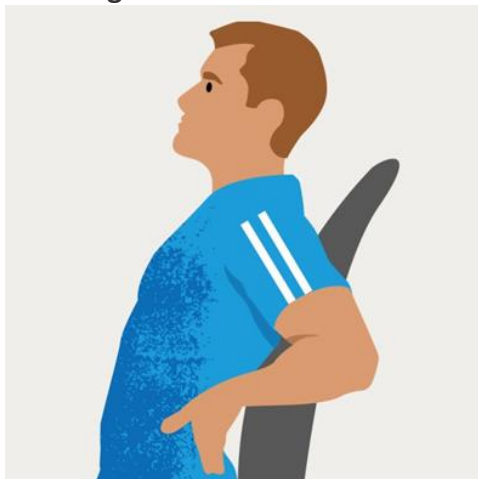
- Hold one arm across your body.
- Pull your elbow into your chest.
- You should feel your shoulder gently stretching.

3. Shoulder shrugs



- Gently lift your shoulders.
- Let them slowly fall.
- You should feel tension being released as your shoulders drop.

4. Sitting back extensions



- Sit straight with your feet together.
- Put the palms of your hands into the small of your back.
- Lean back over your hands, feeling your lower back stretch out.

5. Neck rotations



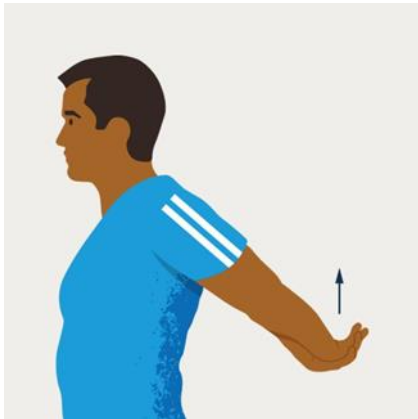
- Keep your head upright.
- Gently turn your head from side to side.
- As you turn your head, try to move it past your shoulder.
- You should feel the muscles on the outside of your neck gradually stretching.

6. Upper shoulder and neck stretch



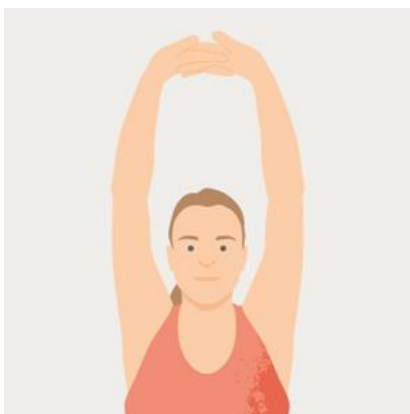
- Sit on one hand.
- Tilt your head away from the hand you're sitting on.
- Tilt your head slightly forward, towards your shoulder.
- You should feel the muscles in your neck and shoulder being stretched.
- Change sides, and repeat.

7. Shoulder extension – one



- Stand up and stretch your arms out behind you.
- Clasp your hands together and gently lift your arms.
- You should feel the pressure in your shoulders ease off.

8. Shoulder extension – two

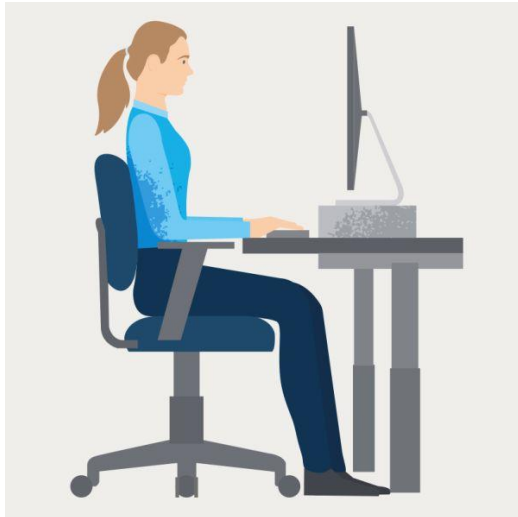


- Hold both arms above your head.
- Link your hands with your palms facing upwards.
- Reach as high as possible.
- You should feel your shoulders stretching.

Also – are you sitting comfortably?

Stretching at your desk can work wonders, but it's even more important to be set up comfortably at your desk. Here are some handy tips:

- Keep your chair close to your desk.
- Adjust the height and make sure your feet are fully on the floor.
- The top of your computer screen should be level with your eyes, and about an arms-length away from you.



Consider your pose

1. Your hips should be above your knee.
2. Sit right back in your seat, so your whole back is supported.
3. The natural curve of your lower back should fit against the curve of the back rest.
4. The back rest should be slightly reclined (10–15 degrees).
5. Relax your shoulders, and keep your elbows at 90 degrees, just above the desk.

Keep things within reach

This might sound obvious, but arrange your desk so that things you use often are easy to grab. Otherwise, if you need to lean across your desk a lot, you won't get the same back support from your chair.

Take a break

- For every five minutes of intense work at your computer, have a short pause. Stretch your hands, wrists and fingers. Roll your shoulders and rotate your neck.
- Give your eyes a break every 20 minutes, by looking into the distance for 20 seconds.
- Every half hour or so, stand up, stretch and move for 20–30 seconds.
- Keep alert by doing gentle exercises every two hours.