

A Yoga Break at Work

Routine created and published by Dr. Rick Morris

(more information at: <http://www.spinalstenosisanddisc.com/>)

This entire routine should take less than ten minutes. Repeat the stretch after every two to four hours of continuous work. Not only will you feel better, but your work efficiency should improve. Work output has increased in employees who use breaks such as these by 25% over employees who worked continuously without such breaks. Imagine the quality and creativity of your work when you're not in pain and are well oxygenated.

Outer Neck and Shoulder Stretch



Put your right arm behind your back while tilting (not turning) your head to the opposite side. You should feel a pull in your right neck and upper shoulder. If a pinching sensation occurs to your left side, do not perform this exercise. Hold the position for five deep breaths in and out, relaxing more deeply with each exhalation. Repeat to the opposite side.

Shoulder Rolls



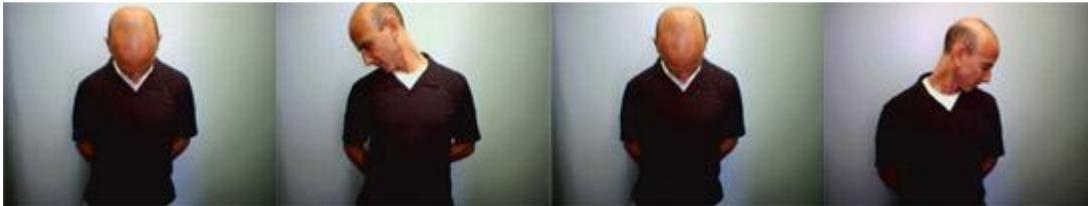
With your arms dangling at your side, roll your shoulders forward and upward on inspiration, and backward and down in a circular motion, on expiration. Start slowly and progress to a fairly quick motion. Do this for about one minute (remember your diaphragmatic breathing).

Neck and Upper Back Stretch



Hold your hands together behind your back as low as possible with your palms facing away from your body, and your shoulders pulled back. Bring your chin all the way down to your chest and take two breaths. Now turn and tilt your head to the right while pulling down with your left arm. Hold for 3 long, slow breaths. Now perform this on your left side. Repeat this 2-3 times.

Neck Circles



Let your arms drop to your sides and drop your chin to your chest. As you breathe in, turn and tilt your head to the right. As you exhale, return your head back to your chest. Next, breathe in while turning and tilting your head to your left. While exhaling, return your head to your chest. Start off slowly, without pain, and progress to a faster pace as your breath at a natural rate. Do this for 30-60 seconds.

Neck Sling



Clasp your hands behind your neck, elbows out, with your little fingers pressing up against the base of your skull. Now arch your middle back against the back of a firm chair (the chair back should not fall backwards). The back of your chair should not be higher than the bottoms of your shoulder blades or lower than the bottoms of your ribs. Now allow yourself to fall backwards letting your head, BUT NOT YOUR NECK, to extend over the top of your hands. This should feel great; if not, do not go back as far. Just relax like this for 15 seconds (remember your breathing). Do this 2-3 times.

The Lumbar Arch



Lean against the back of your chair arching your lower and mid back against the chair back (the chair back should be the same height as described in the last exercise). Place your hands behind the back support or under the seat to give added resistance (note: do not lock your neck backwards). Arch against this as long as it feels comfortable. Feel free to lift your hands above your head while stretching if it improves the comfort of the stretch. Take five comfortable deep breaths while in this position.

The Teapot



Stand with your feet shoulder distance apart. Put your hands on your waist. Turn your left foot out completely (90 degrees) and your right leg in 30 degrees. Now tilt to your left while your left hand is on your left thigh or knee. Hold your right arm straight out from your shoulder. Continue bending to the left side as long as it feels comfortable. Hold this position for 2-3 breaths. Be sure to continuously hold your left leg with your hand wherever it is most supportive. Now try it on the other side. You should feel a stretch to you outer waist and hip on the side opposite the direction that you are bending.

Bend Overs



Straddle your seat with your legs wide apart and locked under the chair. Push your bottom all the way to the back of the seat and bend completely forward and down. Hold this position, if it is comfortable for five deep breaths. Next, place your upper body over your right thigh and bend over your right leg for 3-4 breaths-now try the left leg.

The Bird



While holding on to your desk with your left hand, grab your right ankle with your right hand while your right knee is bent. If this is not comfortable, you may want to use a towel, wrapped around your ankle, to help. If this is easy, you can bend over at your hip (not your waist) keeping your back straight. You should feel a nice stretch in the back of your left thigh and the front of your right thigh. Hold this position for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the opposite leg.

As I've said before, these stretches should feel comfortable and refreshing. If they don't or if they produce pain--please come in for a check-up,