

# The Wellness Report— Spring 2015 Report



## Exercise At Your Desk!

**Can't get out of the office? Try some of these ideas for a healthier, less stressful workday!**

Kelli Calabrese, MS, an exercise physiologist and spokesman for the American Council on Exercise, believes in **60-second** or **10-minute** bursts of aerobic exertion<sup>1</sup>. "This is cardio -- if you get in your [target] heart rate zone," she says. Calabrese says that improving your heart rate variability -- your heart's ability to jump from resting to "pumped" -- has been shown to increase longevity and decrease heart disease risk."

Even when you're not exercising, you should make sure you sit at your desk the right way" says **Jason Queiros, a chiropractor at Stamford Sports & Spine, in Connecticut**<sup>2</sup>, "Stretching is important and easy and can help diminish back pain".



### Here are some of the tips:

Try the neck stretch: Touch your ear to your shoulder and hold it there. For a chest opener, stretch your arms back as if you were trying to grab a pencil between your shoulder blades. Stand in a doorway, hold the door frame on each side and walk forward until you feel a stretch in your chest. Last, try supported back extensions. Hold your hips and gently extend your back by bending backward."



### Carpal Tunnel Reliever

Folks who rarely disengage from the keyboard often develop carpal tunnel syndrome. But this affliction shouldn't catch up to you if you repeat this simple move every day. Stand at your desk, and, arms straight, place your palms on the desk with your fingers pointed toward you. Lower your body slowly until you feel the stretch (you won't have to go far). Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat as needed through the day.



### The Magic Carpet Ride

The "Magic Carpet Ride" works your core and arms. Sit in your chair with your legs crossed and your feet on the seat. Then place your hands on the armrests, suck in your gut and raise yourself a few inches above the seat, using your belly, muscles and hands. Hold for 10 to 20 seconds. Rest for 30 seconds. Repeat five times.

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## The Wooden Leg



For lower-body strength, try the “Wooden Leg.” Sit in your chair. Extend one leg out straight in front of you. Hold for two seconds. Then raise it up as high as you can, and hold it again for two seconds. Repeat with each leg 15 times.

## The Little Mermaid at Work



For both flexibility and core strength, this is one of Heidi Freyer's favorite poses. She's a Pilates instructor and owner of Pirouette, Pilates and More in Wilton, Conn. Sit upright in your chair. Hold your right wrist over your head with your left hand and pull it, stretching your right side. Heidi says make sure to keep your shoulders down as you bend. Hold for 10 seconds. Return to upright posture. Take hold of your left wrist over your head with your right hand and stretch the other way. Repeat five times on each side.

"We are made to move, not sit at a desk 12 hours a day," says Joan Price, author of *The Anytime, Anywhere Exercise Book*<sup>1</sup>

**Stretching exercises** are a natural for the desk-bound, to ease stress and keep your muscles from clenching up. Here are a few suggestions:

- Sitting tall in your chair, stretch both arms over your head and reach for the sky. After 10 seconds, extend the right hand higher, then the left.
- Let your head loll over so that your right ear nearly touches your right shoulder. Using your hand, press your head a little lower (gently, now). Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, and then repeat on the other side.
- Try this yoga posture to relieve tension: Sit facing forward, then turn your head to the left and your torso to the right, and hold a few seconds. Repeat 15 times, alternating sides.

### If the above is too much for you ...

- Take the stairs (two at a time!), not the elevator.
- Get up from your desk and go talk to your co-workers instead of e-mailing them.
- Park in the farthest part of the lot, or walk or bike to work.
- Sip water all day.
- A homemade lunch with lots of vegetables, fruits and whole grains will help you steer clear of the vending machine while keeping your wallet fat and your waistline trim.
- Above all, just don't be lazy.



Sources:

1. *The 10 Best Exercises To Do At Your Desk*, Forbes Feb 6, 2013
2. *Exercise at Your Desk*, WebMD Fitness & Exercise by Jean Lawrence, Jan 3, 2005

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