

FIT to WORK exercises

Try to arrange your work to achieve a mix of sitting and moving around. Get your body moving by doing a few exercises every hour or so. This will increase circulation, send more oxygen to the brain, and help you stay alert. All the exercises should be done gently. Sit comfortably and take five slow, deep breaths before starting the exercises. Breathing should be relaxed throughout. Repeat all exercises three times.



Stretch: Stand up and put the heel of your hand into your lower back. Draw your elbows back and down. Keeping your head and neck steady with chin tucked in, slowly arch your back and look to the ceiling.



Back of forearm and wrist stretch: With your elbow straight, tuck your thumb in and make a gentle fist. Bend your wrist forward gently stretching the forearm muscles, wrist and fingers. Hold for five seconds.

Forward press: Gently interlock your fingers. Press your palms away from your body, gently stretching the forearm muscles, fingers and the muscles between your shoulder blades. Hold for five seconds.



Elbow flare: Put your hands behind your neck, loosely grasped. Keep head and neck tall. Squeeze below the shoulder blades and take elbows back, taking care not to press on the neck. Hold for five seconds.



Neck turning: Rotate your head left then right, taking care to keep your eyes on the horizon and aiming your chin at your shoulders. Use your eyes to focus on something in the distance.

Side to side turning: Sitting slightly forward in your seat, rotate your mid- and upper-back to the right, holding on to the backrest of the chair with your left hand. Hold for five seconds. Do the same in the opposite direction.



Chin tuck: Sitting tall, imagine you are suspended by a piece of string from the crown of your head. Keeping eyes level with the horizon, tuck your chin in to make a double chin. Hold for five seconds.



Shoulder retractions: Stand or sit up straight. Pull your shoulders back behind you, squeezing shoulder blades towards each other. You should feel the stretch across your chest. Hold for five seconds.

How to sit at your workstation



Sit close to your desk and if possible adjust the height of your seat so that:

- > Elbows are at right angles with your upper arms, relaxed at the side of your body.
- > Forearms are parallel to and just above the desktop. Wrists should be straight rather than bent up or down.
- > If possible your hips should be slightly higher than your knees. If you cannot place your feet on the floor in the above position you may need a footrest. If your knees are higher than your hips you may need the desk raised in height.
- > Ensure your low back is supported. If your chair doesn't have a lumbar support, try making one by rolling up a small towel.
- > Adjust the angle of the backrest so it is inclined slightly backwards and you can rest against it comfortably. Do not lean forward.
- > Your eyes should be level with the top of

your display screen, which should be directly in front of you.

- > Do not wedge the telephone between your ear and shoulder. If you are right handed, hold it in your left hand so you can make notes if necessary. Consider using a headset if being on the phone is a large part of your job.
- > Use a copyholder if you work from documents. If you are a copy typist, you may prefer to have the copyholder straight in front of you.
- > Position the keyboard about 10cm from the front edge of the desk directly in front of you.
- > Rest your fingertips lightly on the home (middle) row of keys. When typing the fingers should be slightly curled. Press the keys gently and try to use all fingers.
- > Place the mouse within easy reach. Don't squeeze it and take your hand away when not using it. Try to use keyboard shortcuts.

Do not sit for too long. Stand up and stretch every 20 minutes or so.