HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Health Services

Physical Therapy Department

Recommendations to prevent or limit pain due to prolonged computer use.

If you have Neck Pain or Upper Back Pain:

1. Elevate your monitor so that the top of the screen is at eye level.
2. Sit up straight and look at the top of your monitor.
3. Align your ears over your shoulders.
4. Perform chin tuck (Exercise 1) and neck side bend stretches (Exercise 2).
5. Perform posterior shoulder rolls (Exercise 3).

If you have Low Back Pain:

1. If possible, use an ergonomic chair with an adjustable backrest and seat height.
2. Sit up straight and use the backrest of the chair to support your low back.
3. If the chair is uncomfortable, try using back supports: e.g. Back-Huggar® Lumbar Cushion or McKenzie® Lumbar Roll™
4. If possible, use an adjustable sit-stand desk so that you can stand 20% of your day.
5. Perform standing lumbar extension stretch (Exercise 4).

If you have Forearm, Wrist or Hand Pain:

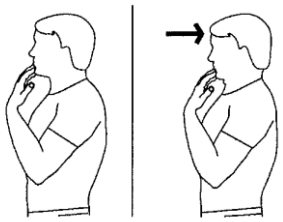
1. Use a light touch with typing and clicking the mouse.
2. Hold the mouse loosely with your hand.
3. Use wrist rests for your keyboard and mouse.
4. Consider using a vertical ergonomic mouse.
5. Consider using a light touch keyboard or split keyboard (https://www.kinesis-ergo.com/) (http://www.goldtouch.com/ergonomic-keyboards/).
6. Use voice dictation instead of typing.
7. Perform wrist stretches (Exercises 5 & 6).

If you have Eye Strain &/or Headaches:

1. Tilt the monitor to avoid glare or use an anti-glare screen.
2. Sit perpendicular to window or close blinds to avoid glare.
3. Adjust the monitor's brightness and contrast.
4. Enlarge font size to make viewing easier.
5. Try wearing blue tinted glasses.
6. Use task lighting behind your screen if you have limited light.
7. Schedule an eye examination with your optometrist to check your vision.

******* To reduce the harmful effects of sitting, **take a 5 minute walk every 30-60 minutes** of sitting.

1. Cervical Retraction (Chin Tuck)



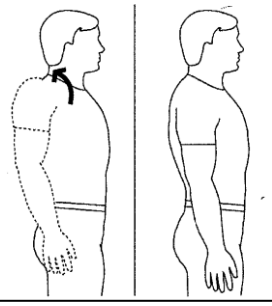
- Sit or stand, looking forward, with good posture.
- Tuck chin in. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Return to start position.
- To progress, place finger on chin, apply backwards pressure.
- Perform 5 repetitions, with any rest break.

2. Neck Stretch



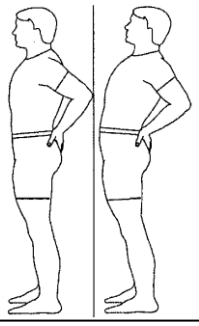
- Place arm behind back.
- Grasp arm with other hand as shown.
- Bend neck sideways until you feel a stretch in your neck.
- Hold the stretch for 20 seconds.
- Repeat on other side.
- Perform 3 repetitions each side, with any rest break.

3. Posterior Shoulder Rolls



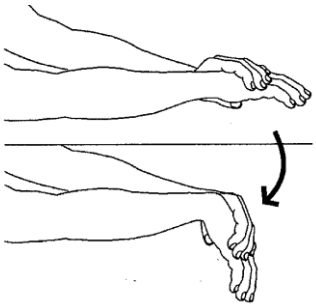
- While standing or sitting, raise shoulders upward towards ears and roll backwards.
- Return to start position.
- Perform 5 repetitions, with any rest break.

4. Lumbar Extension Stretch



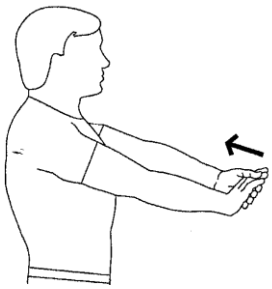
- Stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Place hands on hips as shown.
- Arch backwards, holding for 10 seconds.
- Return to start position and repeat.
- Perform 5 repetitions, with any rest break.

5. Wrist Extensor Stretch



- Begin with elbow straight.
- With other hand, grasp at thumb side of hand and bend wrist downward until stretch is felt.
- Hold stretch for 20 seconds.
- Perform 3 repetitions, with any rest break.

6. Wrist Flexor Stretch



- Begin with elbow straight.
- With other hand, bend wrist upward until gentle stretch is felt.
- Hold stretch for 20 seconds.
- Perform 3 repetitions, with any rest break.