



ERGONOMIC STRATEGIES-STRETCHING & REST BREAKS

Why are Rest Breaks Beneficial?

- Rest breaks reduce static loads on the musculoskeletal system and also reduce the incidence of repetitive strain injuries.
- Breaks increase worker productivity and well-being, especially during continuous computer work.
- Workers usually wait until they experience muscular discomfort before taking rest breaks; by taking rest breaks before symptom onset, injuries can be prevented.
- Research shows that breaks as short as thirty seconds are just as beneficial as longer breaks in order to allow adequate time for overworked muscles to relax.

Tips for Stretching at the Workstation

- Stretching at the workstation should target: fingers and wrists, hands and forearms, chest and upper back, shoulders and neck, both sides of the trunk, and the lower back.

Easy stretches that can be performed at work:

- Open up your hands and spread fingers as far apart as possible. **(Stretches hands, fingers, and wrist)**
- Cross your right arm straight across your body, and pull it closer with a bent left arm locked at the elbow. Repeat with the opposite arm. **(Stretches shoulders)**
- Bring your right ear toward your right shoulder. Use your right hand to apply gentle overpressure to your head. Repeat to the left. **(Stretches neck)**
- Stand up and cross your right leg over your left. Reach your arms above your head, and stretch all the way to the right, while pushing out your left hip. Repeat to the opposite direction. **(Stretches trunk)**
- Bend trunk forward with knees slightly bent, and grab behind your knees. Slowly extend your knees and arch your back. **(Stretches low back)**
- When stretching, make sure to maintain your position for at least thirty seconds per stretch, breathe calmly and regularly, avoid abrupt movements, and try to relax.



QUESTIONS? Contact Rachel Neuman: raneuman@bu.edu or Karen Jacobs: kjacobs@bu.edu

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