

## Stretching Exercises to Reduce Muscle Tension

When we sit at a desk all day doing paper work or computer work, we have muscles that contract for long periods of time and we need to periodically stop and stretch those muscles to prevent tension.

### 1. Neck Stretch

Many of us hold a lot of tension in our neck muscles. Sit up in your chair. Put your right hand on top of your head and gently pull your head down toward your right shoulder. Put your left hand down at your side and lift your left hand so it is like a table and the fingers are pointing straight out from your left side. Feel the stretch along the side of your neck.

Now repeat on the other side. Put your left hand on top of your head and gently pull your head down toward your left shoulder. Put your right hand down at your side and lift your right hand so it is like a table and the fingers are pointing straight out from your right side. Feel the stretch along the side of your neck.

### 2. Chest Stretch

Most of us sit hunched over all day with our chest muscles contracted and our upper back stretched. We want to stretch those chest muscles and contract the back.

Stretch your arms out in front of you with your thumbs touching side by side. Now, open your arms out to the side and as far back as you can go. Bring your shoulders down and back. This is stretching the deltoids, and chest.

### 3. Lower Back Stretch

Sitting in your chair cross your right leg over your left leg. Put your left hand on your right leg and grab the back of your chair with your right hand. Pull gently and square your shoulders against the chair. This is going to give you a nice stretch to the lower back.

### 4. 7 to 1 Stretch

Sitting in your chair extend your right leg out in front of you. Reach with the left arm for the ball of your foot and pull. Bend your leg if you need to. This stretches the deltoid muscles in your shoulders, the lats, lower back, hamstring, and calf and heel chord.

Now repeat with the left leg out in front of you. Reach with the right arm for the ball of your foot and pull.