Desk based exercises

Sitting for long periods (being sedentary) is not good for our health however many of us have jobs that require us to sit for large portions of the day.

Completing these simple exercises regularly through the day will encourage you to get up from your desk and change position.
Exercise 1 - Chest stretch

If you spend a lot of time sat at a desk you may find that the muscles in your chest become tight and the muscles around your shoulder blades are underused.

This simple stretch can help address this:
- sit forward from the back of your chair
- point your thumbs to the ceiling and open your arms to the side until you feel a stretch in your chest
- gently squeeze the muscles between your shoulder blades whilst keeping your shoulders down, away from your ears
- hold the stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times

NOTE: You should not feel any pain or tingling in your arms

Exercise 2 - Sit stretch

Long periods of sitting with your hips flexed and knees bent can cause the muscle at the back of your legs (hamstrings) to become tight.

This simple stretch can help address this:
- perch on the front of your seat and stretch one leg out in front of you
- rest your heel on the floor with your toe pointing up
- lean slightly forward from your hips and look straight ahead
- you should feel a gently stretch behind your leg
- hold the stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times
- repeat this on the following leg

NOTE: You should not feel any pain or tingling in your leg
Exercise 3 - Chair twist

Nothing can replace getting up from your desk to walk or move around, but if that’s not possible it is a good idea to move your spine to reduce feelings of stiffness.

The following exercise can help with this:

- sit forward on your chair and cross your arms to touch the opposite shoulder, lifting your elbows as high as your shoulders
- rotate your head and upper body to the left side, following with your head
- hold the stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times
- repeat on the other side

Press-ups are a great way to make sure the muscles in your upper body are doing something active during the working day.

Exercise 4 - Wall press

Press-ups are a great way to make sure the muscles in your upper body are doing something active during the working day.

These can be done against a wall and still be very effective:

- start by standing with your feet hip width apart. stretch out your arms and rest your palms at shoulder height and width against the wall
- take a couple of small steps away from the wall, tighten up your tummy muscles and slowly lean forward by bending your elbows. keep your spine straight and look at the wall in front of you
- lower yourself until you are a couple of inches from the wall, then push yourself up to return to your starting position
- make sure you lead with your chest so that your arms are doing all of the work. do not allow your back to arch
- aim for three sets of 10 press ups, but you can do more or less depending on how you feel. you can make this harder by moving your feet further away from the wall
Moving more throughout the day can help keep your weight at a healthy level and limit your chances of developing a number of serious illnesses.

For more information on how to be more active plus the most up to date information and guidance on physical activity, visit our physical activity page [www.nwbh.nhs.uk/Lifestyle-advice](http://www.nwbh.nhs.uk/Lifestyle-advice)

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**Exercise 5 - Thigh stretch**

**Spending too much time sitting at your desk can lead to aches in pain in your knees and back.**

**Stretching the muscles at the front of your thigh (quads) can help reduce this:**

- **stand in front of your desk and place your right hand on it for balance**
- **standing on your right leg lift your left heel up towards your left buttock**
- **use your left hand to hold your left foot. You should feel a stretch at the front of your left tight**
- **hold your stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times**
- **repeat the same on the other side**

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