



Stretching & Strengthening for Workplace Athletes

It's important that you stretch your body regularly to loosen and strengthen the muscles. Releasing tension in your body can improve your overall feelings of wellness, too.

These stretches may help increase flexibility, extend your range of motion, and prevent injury. If you're short on time, try to do them in shorter spurts throughout the day. You can increase the number of sets you do as you gain strength and mobility.

1. Shoulder Raises & Shoulder Press down

1. While standing or sitting, and with your arms by your side and a straight back, slowly lift your shoulders up toward your ears.
2. Hold here for a few seconds.
3. Slowly lower your shoulders back down to a neutral position.
4. From the neutral position, press shoulders toward the floor.
5. Repeat this sequence 5 times.

2. Shoulder Rolls

1. Maintain good posture while standing or sitting.
2. Roll your shoulders up, back, and down.
3. Do this movement 10 times.
4. Then, roll your shoulders up, forward, and down 10 times.

3. Ear to Shoulder

1. Sit with a straight spine and tilt your head toward your right shoulder.
2. Go as far as you can without straining or lifting your left shoulder.
3. Deepen the stretch by using by pressing your left shoulder away from your neck & down toward the floor.
4. Hold for 30 seconds.

5. Repeat on the opposite side.

4. Chin Retraction

1. Align your head, neck, and spine while standing or sitting.
2. Extend your chin in front of you as far as it will go without straining.
3. Then pull your chin back into your throat and neck.
4. Repeat this sequence 10 times.

5. Single Arm Cross Stretch

1. Bring your left arm across the front of your body at about chest height.
2. Support your left arm with the elbow crease of your right arm or use your right hand to hold your left arm.
3. Stretch out your shoulder and continue to face forward.
4. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the opposite side.

6. Thumbs Rotate Outward with Lat Pull Down

1. Stand with your arms by your side and rotate your hands outward, leading with your thumbs so thumbs face behind you.
2. From this position, contract your lower lats & let this pulling down, to open your shoulders.
3. Keep your head in a neutral position.
4. Repeat the lat contractions for a count of 10, 3 times.

7. Arched Back Stretch

1. Place the palms of your hands on your lower back with finger tips pointing down.
2. Press your elbows in & toward each other to a comfortable stretch.
3. Hold this stretch for a count of 10 and repeat 3 times.

8. Reach for the sky side stretch

1. Standing straight with proper posture, reach the left hand up toward your midline as tall as you can reach.
2. Hold this reach for a count of 10, repeat 3 times.
3. Repeat on the opposite side.

9. Hip Stretch (seated)

1. Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Place your right ankle on your left knee to create a 90° at the knee.
2. Try to relax your right hip. If you are able, bend forward at the waist to increase the intensity of the stretch.
3. Hold this stretch for a count of 10, repeat 3 times.
4. Repeat on the opposite side.

11. Wrist & Hand Exercises (see handout)

Causes

Tight shoulders can be caused by several factors, including many of the movements you perform in your daily life that cause you to bend forward. That strains your shoulders, neck, and back.

You may create tension in your shoulders from everyday activities such as texting, sitting for extended periods, or carrying heavy bags. Weak muscles, poor posture, and incorrect alignment in your body can also lead to tight shoulders. In some cases, muscle tension may also be the result of injury or chronic stress, or an underlying condition.

Prevention

It's important to take care of your shoulders even if they aren't tight now. Exercising regularly is key to prevention.

- Stay active and engage in activities that require you to use your shoulders, such as swimming or yoga.
- Always drink plenty of water, especially when you exercise.
- Avoid a sedentary lifestyle and stay as active as possible.
- Try to maintain good posture and proper alignment in your body. Pay attention to your body as you go about your daily tasks. If you sit for long periods, change your position often and get up for a short break every 30 minutes.
- Reduce your stress.

References:

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