

Stretches from the Mayo Clinic

Standing or sitting for long periods of time can take a toll on your muscles. To prevent or reduce stiffness and pain, try simple office stretches throughout the day. Remember to stretch in a smooth movement without bouncing, and expect to feel tension while you are stretching but not pain. If it hurts, back off to where you feel no pain then hold the stretch.



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Shoulder stretch

Start by stretching the back of your shoulder:

- Place one hand under your elbow.
- Lift your elbow and stretch it across your chest. Don't rotate your body as you stretch.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the back of your shoulder.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat the stretch with the other arm.



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Chest stretch

To stretch the muscles of your chest:

- Place your hands behind your head.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together, bringing your elbows back as far as possible.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat.



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Upper arm stretch

To stretch the back of your upper arm and shoulder:

- Lift one arm and bend it behind your head.
- Place your other hand on the bent elbow to help stretch your upper arm and shoulder.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat the stretch with the other arm.



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Chin tuck

To loosen stiff neck and shoulder muscles, try the chin tuck:

- Face straight ahead.
- Lower your chin to your chest.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the back of your neck.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat.



Head turn

You can also stretch the muscles in your neck by turning your head to one side:

- Face straight ahead.
- Turn your head to one side while keeping your shoulders straight.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the side of your neck and your shoulder.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Turn your head to the other side and repeat the stretch.



Lower back stretch

To stretch your lower back:

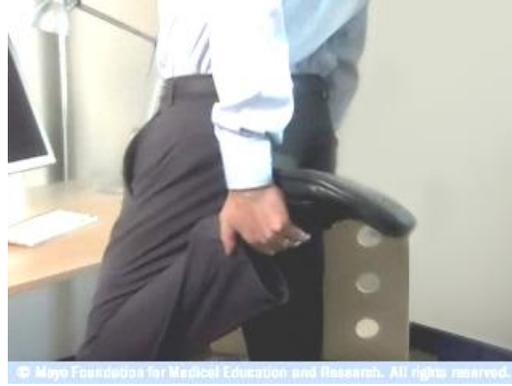
- Sit forward in your chair.
- Bring one of your knees toward your chest. Use your hands to grab the back of your thigh and gently pull it toward you. Keep your back straight, being careful not to lean forward.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in your lower back and the upper part of your buttock.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat the stretch with the other leg.



Side neck stretch

To stretch the muscles along the side of your neck:

- Face straight ahead.
- Tilt your head so that you're moving your ear toward your shoulder. Don't bring your shoulder up to your ear.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the side of your neck.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Tilt your head to the other side and repeat the stretch.



Standing thigh stretch

You might also want to try standing stretches. To stretch the front of your thigh:

- Stand up straight, placing one hand on a chair or desk for stability.
- Grab one of your ankles — or your pant leg — and bring it up toward your buttock. Remember to maintain an upright position, keeping your back straight and your knees parallel to one another.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the front of your thigh.
- Relax and slowly return to the starting position.
- Repeat the stretch with your other leg.