

# SPORTC<sub>X</sub> ADVICE DESK POSTURE



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# Stretching the neck, shoulders and trunk



## WHY STRETCH?

Due to our increasingly inactive and deskbound lifestyles resulting from our growing use of computers and labour saving devices such as cars, the incidence of postural problems has risen dramatically. Avoiding bad postural habits, particularly while sitting, is very important. Most back and neck problems occur due to weaknesses and imbalances in the muscles used to maintain the shape of your spine. These include your neck, back, shoulder and stomach muscles.

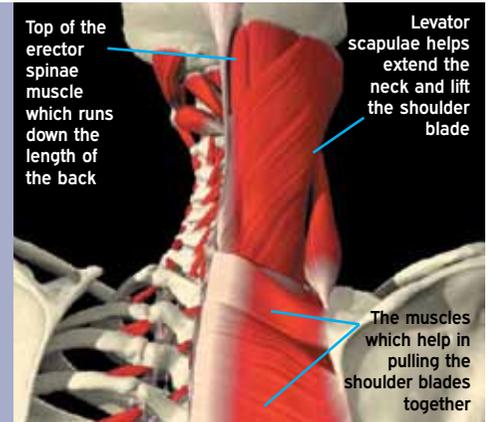


Image showing some of the neck muscles

This leaflet includes a few stretches designed to keep your muscles flexible and in good balance with each other. It is a good idea to do three or four stretches every hour, particularly if you spend a lot of time sitting during your day. It is also important to make sure

that your chair, desk and computer are set up correctly so that you are not altering your posture to compensate for a bad position. If you think this may be the case, speak to your occupational health department, nurse or physical therapist at your place of work. They will help with advice and, where appropriate, equipment modifications.

## CONTACT DETAILS

## OTHER INFORMATION

## WHO IS SPORTEX CO-kinetic

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Produced by



# Advice handout

# Neck, shoulders and trunk

## YOUR REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

This programme has specific exercises to help stretch and strengthen muscles which may be weak. It is really important to ensure the exercises are performed with good technique and good postural control. Make sure you are pain-free at all times and take care not to progress too quickly. Where appropriate repeat the exercises on both sides. We have given suggested sets and repetitions, but everyone is different so your practitioner may give guidance that is more specific to you.

## STRETCHING EXERCISES

### NECK ROTATION HALF CIRCLES

Sit (or stand) up straight and without hunching your shoulders, drop your ear to your shoulder on one side. Then tilt your head forward and perform a gentle half circle so your opposite ear and shoulder come together. Do not tilt your head back at any point.

SETS	REPS
1	15



### NECK EXTENSION

In a seated or standing position place the fingers of your hands on each side of your neck near the spine. Tilt your head backwards while at the same time applying a gentle pressure with your fingers in the opposite direction. At no point should you feel any pain.

SETS	REPS
1	15



### RHOMBOIDS STRETCH

In a seated or standing position stretch your arms out in front of you with your palms facing outwards. Reach out as far as you can to feel a stretch between your shoulder blades. Hold for 10 seconds. If you prefer, you can do this exercise one arm at a time.

SETS	REPS
1	15



### CHEST STRETCH IN A DOORWAY

Standing sideways on to a doorframe with your arm bent to 90° and your palm placed against the door frame. Turn your body away from the frame so you feel a stretch in your chest. Hold for 10 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	10



## MAKE SURE TO WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

If muscles are tight, weak or injured, it is particularly important to warm up (unless advised otherwise by your practitioner) with a fast walk or a gentle jog at a pain-free pace for 5 minutes before you start your exercises. This increases your circulation and helps prepare the muscles for the activity to come. When you have finished your exercises, end the session with a 5 minute gentle walk or slow jog to allow your heart rate to slow down gradually.

## BACK AND STOMACH STRETCHES

continued overleaf

### SUPINE KNEES-TO-CHEST LOWER BACK STRETCH

Lie on your back on a bed or the floor. Bring one knee slowly into your chest, followed by the other knee and clasp your arms around the back of your thighs. Hold for 10-15 seconds rocking in a gentle rhythm.

SETS	REPS
1	5



### LUMBAR ROTATION

Lie on your back with your arms out at 90° and your knees bent with your feet flat on the floor. Gently let your knees roll to one side of your body as far as it's comfortable. Then return to the starting position and roll to the other side.

SETS	REPS
1	10



### BACK EXTENSION/STOMACH STRETCH

Sitting on a seat preferably with a back support that comes midway down your back. Wrap your arms around your shoulders and then gently extend your back over the back of the chair. At no point should you feel pain.

SETS	REPS
1	10



### FLEXION/THORACIC STRETCH

Sitting on a seat, again wrap your arms around your shoulders and lean forward as far as you can without pain, rounding your shoulders and back.

SETS	REPS
1	10

