

De-stress at your desk



Doing these exercises regularly will help to:

- reduce stress
- combat the harmful effects of prolonged computer use
- reduce aches and pains
- relax the body
- improve concentration.

1. Review your posture:

Ensure that:

- Your feet are planted flat on floor
- You are seated on your "sitting bones" with hips relaxed
- Your back is straight and relaxed
- Imagine a golden thread pulling straight up through your head
- Ensure your chin is drawn in and shoulders are down

Take a deep, slow, noiseless abdominal breath, with the tip of the tongue on the top palate.

2. Check your breathing:

Feel your diaphragm moving down as you breathe in and up as you breathe out. Breathe into your belly.

Breathe into your belly for the count of 4, hold it for 16, and breathe out to the count of 8.

Try to notice a feeling of cooler air around the nostrils on the in-breath and warmed air on the out-breath.

When we get stressed we tend to breathe shallow and fast, reducing our oxygen intake, which can leave us with a feeling of panic and anxiousness. These breathing exercises can help us to stay calm.

3. Do some stretches:

Interlock the fingers, palms up. Stretch the arms above head then bend sideways – to the left and the right, breathing out as you stretch.

With hands still above the head, bend forward bringing the hands slowly down and drop forward with the head below the knees. Feel the spine opening. Slowly return to sitting position as you breathe in.

Place your hands behind your head and gently pull your head gently downwards; feel the stretch. Hold for several seconds and then repeat. Sit up straight then gently twist sideways each way a few times.

Gently turn the head to the left – exhale on out-turn, then back to centre - inhale on return. Use the eyes to look as far to the sides as possible. Repeat to the right and back to centre. Deep long breaths. Repeat 5 times.

Review your posture again.

4. Shift your metabolic waste:

The lymphatic system has no manual pump system, so waste products get stuck and need to be shifted through moving the major muscle groups – especially legs:

- Shake the legs
- Stretch out your legs alternately – feet out to the front
- Lift your legs up onto your toes – tense and release the calves to pump the lymph
- Breath into the abdomen
- Roll/circle the shoulders 5 times each way
- Circle the chin in and out forwards as if circling a tennis ball.
- Tap the chest to relax the thymus gland

5. Massage yourself:

Rub your palms together to warm, them, rub the neck and squeeze the back of the neck with overlapping palms

Rub the hands to warm them then use palms to rub the scalp & loosen it.
Use 3 fingers to circle down sides of the face and into the jaw. Tap the jaw
Draw the skin up over the face as if washing it.

Repeatedly tap the tops of your opposite shoulders with palms

Place your left hand on your right shoulder and squeeze gently and then release. Repeat down the right arm to the elbow. Repeat several times. Now place your right hand on your left shoulder and repeat the exercise.

Exhale and turn the head to the right side. Use the right hand to massage the left side of the neck from behind the ear down to the collarbone. Repeat on the other side. Repeat 5 times.

Place the fingertips of both hands in the centre of the forehead and sweep gently outwards towards the temples. Repeat several times.

6. Ease tired eyes:

Prolonged computer use can cause eye strain - use these exercises to help your eyes cope with this.

Vary your focal length by holding a finger up and moving it in towards the nose and out to arms length, keeping your eyes focused on it.

Randomly look at different objects at different distances to vary your focus
Moving eyes only, look up, down, left, right, diagonal up right, diagonal up left, diagonal down right, diagonal down left.

Close your eyes then draw a figure of 8 with eyeballs – both ways slowly.

Use two fingers of each hand to massage around the eye sockets – both directions- very gently due to the fine skin around the eyes.

Rub your hands together to warm them, then close your eyes and place the palms over eyes, blocking out all light. Open your eyes into darkness. Relax the eyes and bathe in the darkness. Take 5 deep slow breaths. Rest the eyes. Repeat 3 times, then on the last time, slide the hands gently down face to let light seep in gradually.

7. And finally...

Place your hands gently in your lap. Check your posture and make sure it is relaxed, that your spine is open, and you are breathing into your belly.

Ideally – get up and walk round (especially outside)

You can watch a video illustrating how to do these exercises on YouTube at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZwN3tfHDI>

Or click on the link on the Free Resources page of our website: www.salt-box.co.uk

Don't forget that Saltbox can also help you to improve staff wellbeing through:

- Complementary therapies
- Relaxation classes
- Stress management training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Morale boosting events such as awaydays and conferences
- Consultancy for staff wellbeing programmes

We also offer a range of comprehensive in-house training services. For more information please do contact us at info@salt-box.co.uk or on **01373 837333** or visit www.salt-box.co.uk for more free resources to improve wellbeing, motivation and morale.

