

HARBOR-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: BODY MECHANICS – EXERCISES TO RELIEVE MUSCLES IN SUSTAINED POSITIONS

POLICY NO. 464

PURPOSE:

To provide employees with guidelines for stretching exercisers to relieve muscular strain and prevent repetitive motion injuries in the workplace.

POLICY:

At Harbor – UCLA Medical Center, all employees whose jobs require constant or repeated forward bending or prolonged sitting/standing should perform a stretching session every one to two hours for 60 seconds.

PROCEDURE:

Exercises should be performed properly to prevent injury. Recommended exercises are as follows:

- Chin Tuck/Stretch
To realign your cervical curve, simply slide your chin straight back, keeping your head and ears leveled. (You’ll know you’re doing this exercise correctly if it gives you the feeling of a double chin). Repeat 5-10 times throughout the day.
- Lateral Neck Stretch
The muscles on the sides of your neck get very tight with forward head posture while working with your arms. This can slow the blood supply to your arms during work, leading to greatly reduced work tolerance and repair of the working neck and arms. This is an abnormal work stress that you can easily avoid.

These muscles respond well to gently stretching that can greatly reduce your work stress. Sit upright; place your right hand on top of your left shoulder. Hold that shoulder down as you tip your head fully away to the right. Keep your face pointed forward or even turned slightly to the left to get at all muscle fibers, and hold this stretch gently for ten seconds. Repeat for the other side.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/1/99
REVISED: 11/10, 10/14, 10/17
REVIEWED: 2/02, 9/04, 6/06, 11/10, 10/14, 10/17
REVIEWED COMMITTEE:

SUPERSEDES:

APPROVED BY:

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- Shoulder Shrug/Inhale-Relax/Exhale Relaxation Stretch
Constant work posture and activity will gradually tighten your working muscles. This muscle tension is wasted muscle work that will wear you down. It is wasted energy you don't need to spend. It is very easy to avoid this wasted work. This is done with a very simple but effective relaxation reflex. First, sit upright, inhale deeply as you shrug your shoulders and clench your fists. Spend three seconds on this tension. Then exhale and relax your upper body fully, spending five seconds in the exhale/relaxed phase. Do this twice. This will result in greatly relaxed muscles that will tolerate work much better. Now, roll your shoulders backward with a circular movement three times, then roll your shoulders forward three times.
- Wrist Tendon Stretch
Excessive hand use can tighten forearm muscles. This can increase pressures on their tendons as they pass through the wrist. Stretching these muscles can reduce the tension on these tendons. Place your hands in prayer position. Keep palms flat together as you raise your elbows to stretch your forearm muscles. Stretch ten seconds. Then just shake your hands limp for a few seconds.
- Standing Back-Bend
Stand-up, press your palms on your lower back for support, and gently bend your upper and lower back backward. (For your safety, stand up to do this.)
- Hamstring Stretch
While in the sitting position, extend your knee and pull your foot upward toward your body. Hold for five seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

Note: For employees who have pre-existing medical conditions, you should check with your physician **prior** to starting new exercises that may affect your condition.

REFERENCES:

DHS Policy No. 901 Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy No. 448 Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy No. 462 Ergonomics Program.

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy No. 463 Body Mechanics-Computers.