

## Prevent Shoulder and Neck Pain

Shoulder and neck pain is the most common problem among office workers. Working hard in front of the computer for a long time, office workers may easily neglect the importance of maintaining proper working postures which cause muscle stiffness in the whole body. If office workers simply sit back and neglect improper postures, their shoulders, neck and muscles will be under pressure persistently with restricted movements, leading to musculoskeletal disorders and discomforts.



### Causes of Musculoskeletal Disorders


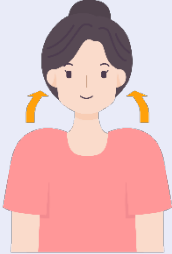
Improper daily and work postures	Examples
Bend the body forward and lean the head forward excessively	Sit closely in front of the computer for a prolonged period of time
Lower the head for a prolonged period of time	Lower the head to look at the keyboard frequently
Bend the neck sideways for a prolonged period of time	Cradle the phone between the neck and shoulder frequently
Shift the focus to one side or do repetitive movements on one side	View the screen sideways frequently

### Prevention Tips

Improper postures pose extra pressure on the cervical vertebrae and increase the load of muscle fascial. As majority of the office workers lack exercises for a prolonged period of time, their tissues at the back and neck will easily be damaged and feel painful. In addition, feeling tense will disturb sleep and affect work performance. If office workers can engage in moderate amount of exercises and stretching exercises while working and in daily life, not only can they ease the stiffness and pain of neck muscles, improve the health of joints, but also prevent and improve neck and shoulder pain.

### Stretching Exercises

Function	Descriptions of movement	
Neck stretch (up/ down) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bend the neck slowly backward and look up</li> <li>Put one hand gently on the forehead to help</li> <li>Stop when the neck muscles at the front are slightly stretched</li> <li>Hold this position for 10 to 30 seconds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bend the neck slowly forward and look down</li> <li>Put one hand gently on the rear head to help</li> <li>Stop when the neck muscles at the back are slightly stretched</li> <li>Hold this position for 10 to 30 seconds</li> </ul>
Neck stretch (left/ right) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move the left ear towards the left shoulder slowly and put the left hand gently on right side of the head to help</li> <li>Stop when the neck muscles on the right are slightly stretched</li> <li>Hold this position for 10 to 30 seconds, then repeat on the other side</li> </ul>	

<p>Upper back and shoulder stretch</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Straighten the hands and interlock the fingers. Stretch forward as far as possible</li> <li>▪ Turn the wrists inwards with palms facing out</li> <li>▪ Push the arms forward like arching the back</li> <li>▪ Lower the head and keep it relaxed. Continue until the upper back and the back of the neck are slightly stretched while the abdominal muscles are contracted</li> <li>▪ Hold this position for 10 to 30 seconds, then relax and back to the starting position</li> </ul>
<p>Shoulder shrug</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stand straight with arms relaxed on both sides</li> <li>▪ Take a deep breath. Lift up the shoulders at the same time and lift up backwards as far as possible</li> <li>▪ Breathe out and relax as the shoulders lower to the starting point</li> <li>▪ Repeat 10 times</li> </ul>

\*Remarks:

1. Each set of movement can be repeated for 2 to 3 times in each round. Practise any time during the day.
2. Not inducing pain is the principle of the stretching extent. Remember all movements should be performed slowly. At the same time, a smooth breathing should be maintained.
3. If the shoulder and back pain cannot be relieved, please consult medical professionals.

### Proper Sitting Posture

Shoulders hanging naturally. The waist and back should be close to the back of the chair. Feet should rest on the floor at the same time. If feet cannot rest on the floor, a foot rest can be used to provide a stable support.



It is everyone's wish to stay away from shoulder and neck pain. However, we should tackle the crux of the problem first. To start with, improve improper postures and avoid prolonged inactivity at work. On the other hand, try to relax in daily life as far as possible and maintain regular exercise every day for stress relief. To prevent shoulder and neck pain and bring physical and mental benefits, it is recommended to do the above stretching exercises for a few minutes after working consecutively for 45 to 60 minutes.