

Work Out at Your Desk

Always start with good posture.

Start each of these exercises with good posture to strengthen and protect your back. Make sure that your head is in a neutral position with your ears over your shoulders, your shoulders are back, your abdominal muscles are drawn in and contracted, and your hips are tilted in a neutral position.

Draw-In Maneuver

This exercise is to train your inner abdominal muscles. While sitting at your desk, put both feet flat on the floor. Practice your good posture with your arms at your sides. Start by taking a deep breath in through the nose. As you exhale, draw the abdomen in as if pulling your belly button into your spine. Keep contracted for 5 to 10 seconds, and repeat 10 times.

Shoulder Retraction

This exercise is to strengthen your back muscles. While sitting at your desk, put both feet flat on the floor and sit away from the back of your chair. Practice your good posture with your arms relaxed on the armrests. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, and think about trying to make your shoulder blades touch. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Bring your shoulders back to a neutral position. Repeat 10 to 12 times.

Wall or Desk Push-ups

This exercise is to strengthen your chest, triceps, and shoulder muscles. Practice your good posture. From a standing position, face your desk and put your hands shoulder-width apart at the edge of your desk, or against a sturdy wall. Walk your feet back until your body is straight. Lower yourself toward the desk or wall till your chest nearly touches it. Contract your chest and push back up until your arms are straight, but don't lock your elbows. Repeat 10 to 12 times. If you are new to this exercise, start with the wall version since it places less stress on the muscle groups.

Desk Dips

This exercise is to strengthen your triceps muscles. Practice your good posture. Begin by standing, facing away from your desk, and place your palms on the edge of your desk. Take a couple of steps forward with your feet flat on the floor and your legs together. Pretend you are sitting in a chair, and lower yourself until your arms and legs are at a 90-degree angle. Then, pushing through your palms with your elbows tucked in, extend your arms, making sure not to shrug your shoulders. Repeat 10 to 12 times.

Chair Squats

This exercise is to strengthen your legs and hips. Practice your good posture. Stand, face your chair, and put your hands on the back of your chair for support. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart. Slowly descend by bending at the hips, knees, and ankles, and squat to about a 90-degree angle. Then, while keeping your weight distributed through the heel and mid-foot, reverse the direction and proceed to a standing position. Repeat 10 to 12 times.

Water Bottle Curls

This exercise is to strengthen your bicep muscle. Practice your good posture. Sit at the edge of your chair and grab your water bottle. With your arms relaxed at your sides, tighten your bicep and pull the water bottle toward your shoulder, then reverse by extending your arm toward the floor. Repeat 10 to 12 times, and then switch arms.

Calf Raises

This exercise is to strengthen your calf muscles. Practice your good posture. While seated at your desk, feet flat on the floor, raise both heels and distribute your weight onto your toes. Hold for 2 to 3 seconds, contracting your calf, then return your heels to the floor. Repeat 10 to 12 times.

Things to Remember

- Practice good posture.
- Pull your abs in.
- Don't hold your breath.
- Use slow and controlled movements.
- Tighten your muscles.
- Keep moving.
- Drink plenty of water.

California Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *At your desk workout*. Retrieved July 31, 2015, from <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

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