

Virtual learning or telework have you in a slump at your computer?

Setting yourself up for postural success is key. Spending extended periods of time in poor postural positions adds stress to muscles, ligaments, and joints, and doesn't allow the body to function with efficiency.

Tips for setting up your workspace:

1. Computer screens should be 16-19 inches from your face
2. You should be able to see the top and bottom of the screen without moving your head up or down
3. Your head should be inline directly over your shoulders
4. Feet should be placed comfortably, flat on the floor
5. Elbows should be close to your side and relaxed
6. If your chair has a curve, it should match the curve in your back
7. If you adjust your chair height, you should also adjust your screen after

Additional Suggestions:

1. Take breaks to avoid postural fatigue. Set an alarm to remind yourself to stand up and move around
2. Stand up desks are also an option. Adjust screen heights and keyboards to allow for more freedom of movement
3. Avoid working in bed
4. To set up your space on a budget, use household items to make your space more ergonomically friendly
 - a. Old textbooks and boxes can be used to elevate screens
 - b. Kitchen tables and TV trays can replace sitting a laptop on your lap
 - c. Try using a dining room chair if an office chair is unavailable

Exercises to help improve posture and make the body more efficient

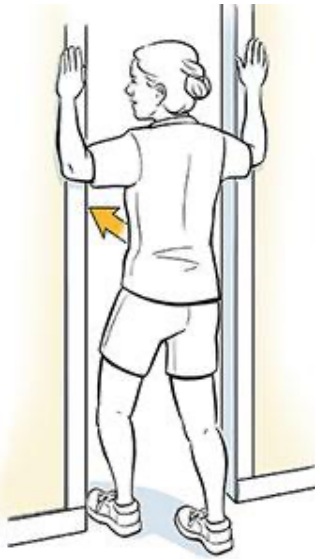
We live in a world which forces us to spend a lot of time doing activities that are in front of our body (driving, computer work, and cellphones). Due to these factors, the middle back muscles become weak and the chest muscles becomes stronger and tighter. When this occurs, the body moves into a forward shoulder or hunched position. Stretching tight muscles and strengthening weak muscles can work to improve posture and make the body more efficient.

Stretching



Upper Trapezius Stretch

While seated, place the right hand on the end of the chair. Squeeze shoulder blades together. Tip the head to the left and apply gentle pressure to the head using the left hand. For an additional stretch, tip the head slightly forward while tipping to the side. Hold for 30 seconds 3 times. Repeat on the other side.



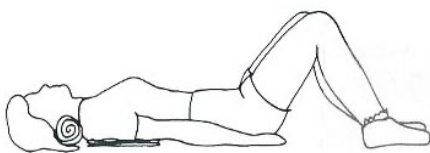
Pectoralis Stretch

Stand in a doorway. Bend both elbows to 90 degrees. Raise arms to just below 90 degrees at the shoulder. Forearms should rest against the doorframe. Gently shift body forward and feel a stretch through the chest. Hold for 30 seconds 3 times.



Thoracic Rotation Stretch

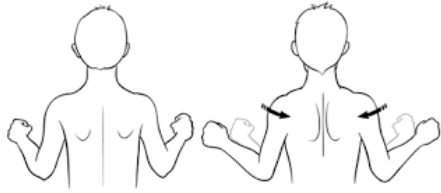
Lay on the right side with arms straight out in front and knees/hips bent to 90 degrees. Take the left arm and lift it directly towards the ceiling, then continue towards the floor behind you. As if, you are making a rainbow with your arm. Only go as far as comfortable without pain in the upper back or shoulder. Keep both knees together on the floor on the right side. Hold for 15 seconds 5 times.



Cervical Extension

Take a small towel and roll it up until it is about 6 inches in diameter. Lay on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place the rolled towel under your neck and let your head rest towards the ground over the roll. Hold for 1-2 minutes as needed.

Strengthening



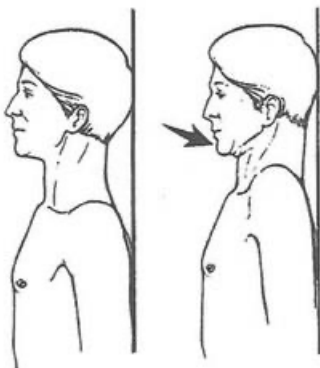
Scapular Squeezes

Place your elbows at your side and bend them to 90 degrees. Squeeze your shoulder blades down and back. Shoulders should not lift up when doing this exercise. Hold for 5-8 seconds. Complete 3 sets of 15 reps.



Scapular Depression Press Down

Begin seated and place hands on the chair surface. Keeping arms straight, press down lifting the bottom of the seat. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Complete 3 sets of 15 reps.



Chin Tuck

Stand against the wall with your shoulders and back of head pressed against the wall. Do not tip the head down. Retract the chin towards the back of the head. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Complete 3 sets of 15 reps.