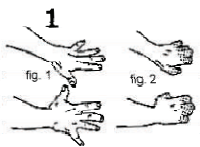


## Stress Relief—Computer & Desk Stretches

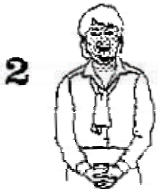
Prolonged sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain. But, by taking a five or ten minute break to do a series of stretches, your whole body can feel better. It's also helpful to learn to stretch spontaneously, throughout the day, stretching any particular area of the body that feels tense for a minute or two. This will help greatly in reducing and controlling unwanted tension and pain.

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-20 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmical. Don't worry about how far you can stretch, stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.



1 Separate and straighten your fingers until tension of a stretch is felt. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for ten seconds. Repeat stretch in fig. 1 once more.



2 This stretch may cause people around you to think you are very strange, indeed, but you often find a lot of tension in your face from eye strain. Raise your eyebrows and open your eyes as wide as possible. At the same time, open your mouth and stretch the muscles around your nose and chin and stick your tongue out. Hold this stretch for 5-10 seconds. Caution: If you have clicking or popping noises when opening mouth, check with your dentist before doing this stretch.



3 Shoulder Shrug: Raise the top of your shoulders to your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.



4 With fingers interlaced behind head, keep elbows straight out to side with upper body in a good aligned position. Pull your shoulder blades toward each other to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Do several times. This is good to do when shoulders and upper back are tense or tight.



5 Start with head in a comfortable, aligned position. Slowly tilt head to left side to stretch muscles on side of neck. Hold stretch for 10-20 seconds. Feel a good, even stretch. Do not overstretch. Then tilt head to right side and stretch. Do 2-3 times to each side.



6 From a stable, aligned sitting position turn your chin toward your left shoulder to create a stretch on the right side of your neck. Hold right stretch tensions for 10-20 seconds. Do each side twice.