

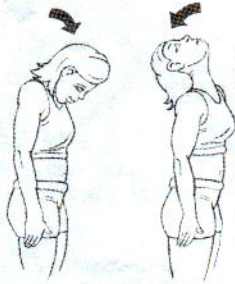
# Stretches to relieve muscle tension from sitting

Sitting for prolonged periods while working at a desk or travelling can cause uncomfortable tension in the neck, shoulders and back. Furthermore, veins in the lower leg can become compressed. This prevents blood from flowing back to the heart, causing it to pool in the lower legs and increases the risk of blood clots. Here are some simple stretches that you can perform to help relieve muscle tension and improve blood flow through the legs. Hold each of the stretches for a few seconds, relax and then repeat.

1. Lower your right ear towards your right shoulder. At the same time, relax and lower your left shoulder to stretch the side of the neck. Repeat on the other side.



2. Bring your head forward and try to touch your chin on your chest. Hold it there for a few seconds and then put your head back as if looking at the roof. Relax and repeat.



3. Shrug your shoulders by lifting them up towards your ears. Hold the tension for a few seconds, then gently drop your shoulders and relax them completely.



4. To help relieve tension in your upper back, put your hands behind your head and pull your shoulder blades together. Hold the tension for a few seconds and repeat.



5. Clasp your fingers together and push your arms out in front of you with your palms facing forwards. You will feel a stretch in your upper back. Hold for a few seconds and relax.



6. Repeat the above exercise, but this time stretch your arms above your head with your palms facing the ceiling. You will feel a stretch in your arms, shoulders and upper body. Relax and repeat.



7. To help relieve tension in your lower back, lean forward at the waist, over your knees, and touch the floor. Hold that position for 10-20 seconds and return to a sitting position.



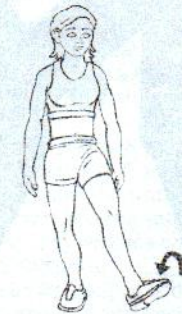
8. Stand with the palms of your hands resting on your lower back. Stretch by pulling your shoulder blades together slightly and arching your back. You will feel tension in your upper and lower back and stretching across your chest. Hold for a few seconds, relax and repeat.



9. Roll your ankles and move your feet up and down.



10. From a standing position, raise your heels off the floor to stand on your toes. Gently return to a standing position and repeat. You may choose to hold on to something to prevent falling while performing this exercise.



11. From a standing position, hold onto a chair or wall to stabilise yourself and stretch your calf muscle by stepping back with one leg and bending slightly at the opposite knee. Extend the leg behind you and lower your heel to the floor. Hold this position for 10 seconds and repeat with the other leg.



12. If possible, get up frequently and walk around.

*Remember, stretching should not be uncomfortable. If you feel pain or discomfort on stretching discontinue that exercise and seek medical advice.*

**Norflex® Co** The No. 1 prescribed muscle relaxant brand<sup>1</sup>

Revised by Dr. David Webb BSc(Hons), MBBCh (Wits), N Cert Ex Sc. (HFPA). May 2012.

