

# Exercises at your Desk



# Background

- Average worker spends 3 hours/day sitting
  - A lot of us probably sit more....
- Long hours of occupational sitting have been linked to many health problems:
  - increases odds of being overweight or obese (Mummery et al. *Am J Prev Med* 2005)
  - neck and shoulder problems (Tornqvist et al. *Epidemiology* 2001)
  - chronic venous disease (Criqui et al., *J Vasc Surg* 2007)
- Inconclusive evidence whether or not occupational sitting is linked to back pain (Hartvigsen et al., *Scan J Public Health* 2000)



# Exercise to the Rescue!

- Brief amounts of physical activity throughout day can make a big impact towards improving your health
- These are some simple mobility drills & stretches that will help you feel better
- Exercises
  1. Stomach Vacuum
  2. Fist Exercise
  3. IT Band Stretch\*\*
  4. Clenching Feet
  5. Three plane neck movements
  6. Shoulder rotations
  7. Good Morning
  8. Chair Squat
  9. Spine rotation
  10. Calf Raise

\*\*this exercises are not skirt-appropriate

# 1. Stomach Vacuum

- **Target:** Deep abdominal muscles, promotes healthy spine
- **Performance:** Draw belly button into spine without curling trunk forward. Hold contraction for a count of 10 sec
- **Tips:** Try to make torso as long as possible



## 2.Fist Exercise

- **Target:** Extensor & flexor muscles of hand
- **Performance:** Extend fingers from closed fist, then clench your fist again. Perform a total of 20 repetitions
- **Tips:** Try to perform this movement as quickly as possible



# 3.IT Band Stretch

- **Target:** the Ilio-tibial (IT) band is a sheet of connective tissue that runs from your hip to your knee. Tight IT bands are a common cause of knee pain
- **Performance:** Sitting with legs crossed (right-angle to floor), touch your chest to your calf. Hold for 10-30 sec each leg
- **Tips:** Try to keep your lower back as flat as possible while doing this



# 4. Clenching Feet

- **Target:** Increased activity of foot and calf muscles will help prevent blood pooling in lower extremities
- **Performance:** While sitting, alternate extending and clenching your toes. Perform 20 repetitions.
- **Tips:** Try to perform this movement as quickly as possible



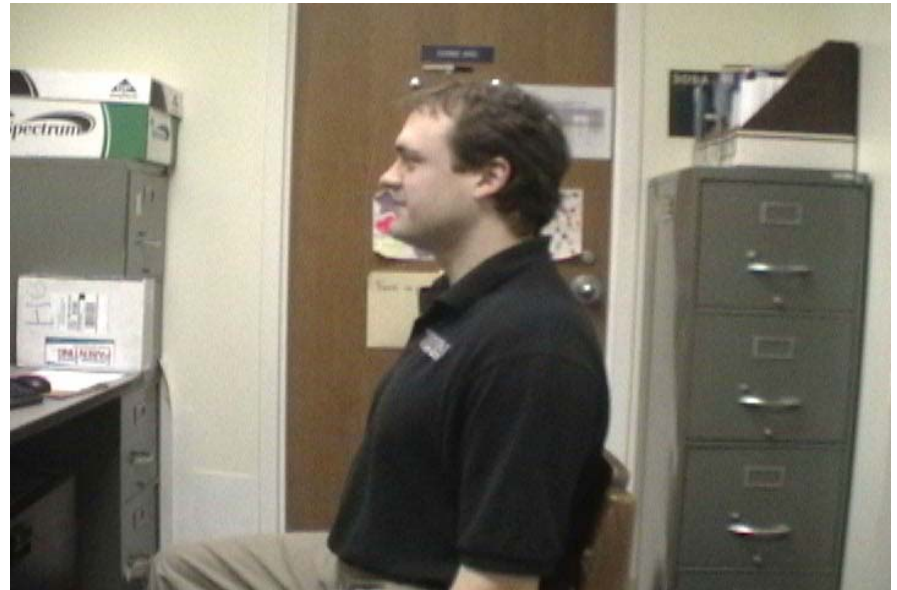
# 5. Three plane neck movements

- **Target:** muscles in the neck
- **Performance:** 1. slowly turn head left, then right, gradually increasing range of motion. 2. tuck your chin in, then tilt your head back. 3. Tilt your head strictly to one side, then to the other (no twisting). Perform 4 repetitions in each plane.
- **Tips:** Perform this movement in a slow, controlled manner. **Do not** combine the 3 movements into a head roll



# 6. Shoulder Rotations

- **Target:** muscles of your upper back and shoulder
- **Performance:** Draw circles with your shoulders, as big as possible. Inhale & expand ribcage as shoulders are moving back. Do 10 circles one direction, then switch directions and do 10 more.
- **Tips:** Perform this movement in a slow, controlled manner.



# 7. Good Morning

- **Target:** muscles of your posterior thigh and low back
- **Performance:** Stand, with your knees slightly bent and your hands pressed into the crease of your thigh. Keeping your lower back arched, bend at the waist. Perform for 10 repetitions
- **Tips:** Performed correctly you should feel this movement in stretching back of your thighs



# 8. Chair Squat

- **Target:** muscles of your anterior thigh and hip extensors
- **Performance:** Stand up out of your chair, without using your hands to help you. Lower yourself back into your chair. Perform for 10 repetitions.
- **Tips:** Holding your arms out straight in front of you will help you keep your balance.



# 9. Spine Rotation

- **Target:** muscles of your lower back
- **Performance:** Sitting with feet & hips planted solidly. Slowly turn your trunk clockwise and counterclockwise. Make sure your head moves with your torso. Perform for 5 repetitions each side.
- **Tips:** Do not bounce and do not move your hips



# 10. Calf Raise

- **Target:** muscles of your lower leg
- **Performance:** Stand on one leg with the knee extended. Raise your heel, then lower it to the floor. Perform 20 repetitions for each leg
- **Tips:** Keep a hand on your desk for balance



# Break up your work day

## Example exercise selection

- Suggest take 5 min every hour to do some (say 3-5) of these exercises
- Try to do a different batch of exercises the next hour
  - Mix and match movements to try to work your whole body every hour a little bit
- These movements should be fairly easy
  - Don't break a sweat, you're at work!
  - Don't try to "force" anything, if it feels difficult, choose another exercise
- If you use MS Outlook, you can set "exercise appointments" every hour to remind yourself when to move

Hour 1 break	Hour 2 break	Hour 3 break
1. Stomach vacuum	1. Chair squat	1. Calf raise
2. Fist exercise	2. IT band stretch	2. Three plane neck movements
3. Good morning	3. Spine rotation	3. Stomach vacuum
4. Three-plane neck exercise	4. Shoulder rotation	4. Clenching feet

# Remember why you Exercise!

- End result: if done properly, exercising at your desk should make you feel better at the end of the day
- Exercise is for YOU
  - Makes you feel better



I exercised at  
MY Desk!!!