YOGA FOR YOUR OFFICE or DESK

Many people feel tightness in their neck, back and shoulders while at work, especially those who have desk jobs that require them to sit still for long periods of time. Unfortunately, our bodies are just not built for extended sitting! If you are one of those people who would like to stretch out your sore back while at work, here are five discreet yoga poses that will help loosen tight muscles and release tension in your spine.

Bharadvaja's Twist (Bharadvajasana I)

Spinal twists help to rehydrate the intervertebral discs in the spine, much like how ringing out a sponge will help it absorb more water. The more hydrated your discs are, the more cushion they will provide and the more comfortable your spine will be.

To come into Bharadvaja's Twist, begin seated in your chair with your knees bent and feet on the floor. On an inhale, lengthen your spine toward the ceiling and root your tailbone into your chair. On your exhale, bring your right hand to the outside of your left knee and begin to rotate into a twist. Bring your left hand behind your back and rest it on your seat cushion for support. Look out over your left shoulder. Stay in this position for a few breaths, moving deeper into the twist with each exhalation. Slowly rotate out of the twist and repeat on the other side.

MICHAEL VENERA

Seated Cat (*Marjaryasana*) and Cow (*Bitilasana*)

Cat and Cow pose are two of the main staples of yoga. They help elongate the spine and stretch the muscles of the abdomen and back. While they are traditionally performed on your hands and knees on the floor, you can easily do them more discreetly while sitting at your des

To begin with Cat pose, sit in your chair with your back straight, knees bent and feet on the floor. Place your hands on your desk in front of you, shoulder-width apart. On an exhale, round your spine toward your chair and lean backward in your seat, keeping your hands in position on the desk. Allow your face to drop toward your lap without tightening your neck. Hold for the remainder of your exhale.

On an inhale, come into Cow pose. Return your spine to a neutral position and continue to arch your back, drawing your face toward the ceiling. Try to avoid pushing down on your hands to force yourself deeper into the pose. Keep your neck long and hold for the remainder of your inhale. Continue to work through Cat and Cow pose as you inhale and exhale.

Adjust these to seated on the edge of your chair—rotate back and forth until spine feels more relaxed.

MARTIN SCONDUTO

Half Cow Face (Gomukhasana)

It's a bit hard to recognize why this pose is called "Cow Face," especially when it is done while seated at your desk. However, this is one of the best stretches you can do to counteract the rounding of the shoulders that many people get when working on computers each day.

It's best to begin this stretch with a prop - either a belt or scarf works great. Holding the scarf in one hand, raise your arm above your head and bend at the elbow, so the scarf hangs down the center of your back. Reach your opposite arm out to the side and rotate your hand so your thumb points to the floor. Bend at the elbow so your hand reaches behind your back to grab the scarf. Adjust the positioning of your hands on the scarf so you can feel the stretch between your shoulder blades. With practice, you may be able to forego the scarf and hook the fingers of your hands. Hold the stretch for a few breaths and repeat on the other side.

Half Eagle (Garudasana)

This is one of the best yoga poses to stretch that hard-to-reach area between your shoulder blades. It also helps to lengthen the muscles of the shoulder and back of the neck.

While seated at your desk, bring your arms out in front of you, parallel to the top of your desk and each other. Cross your right arm over your left and bend your elbows, so your hands point toward the ceiling and the backs of your hands face each other. Your right elbow should be nestled in the bend of your left elbow. Reach your right hand away from you and around the back of your left hand, so your palms face each other. Press the palms together and lift your elbows up. Hold this position for a few breaths, and then pull your elbows down gently to feel a slightly different stretch. Carefully unwind your arms and repeat on the other side.
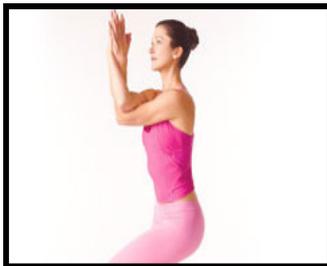
Standing Forward Bend (*Uttanasana*)

Forward bends help to create space between your vertebrae, relieving tension and straightening the spine. They also stretch tight hamstrings and shoulders.

Start in a standing position with your weight evenly distributed between your feet, which should be hip-distance apart. On an inhale, place your hands on your hips and lengthen your spine toward the ceiling. On your exhale, hinge forward at your hips and fold down over your legs with a straight back. If possible, rest your fingertips or hands on the floor. If your hamstrings feel tight, you can bend your knees slightly and hold your elbows. Stay in this pose for a few breaths and notice how you can move deeper into the pose on each exhale.

To come back upright, places your hands on your hips and draw your chest upward on an inhale. Instead of rounding your spine, try to keep a flat back. Move very slowly while

DAVID MARTINEZ

you come up to avoid dizziness   You can also do this seated, or do a 1/2 fold. Supporting yourself on your shins.

NOTE: One of the most effective things you can do to relax and de-stress is BREATHE….slowly in through the nose and out through the nose. Do it for 5 minutes and FEEL the result!   It will clarify your thinking, lower your heart rate and all the associated positive healthy things that go along with that.

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CONSIDER joining us on the mat: ALL levels welcome.
We do NOT come to the mat because we are flexible,
We come to the mat to become flexible.

Tuesday 12:15 to 1PM   Thursday 5:15 to 6:15 PM