

## Stretching Program – Shoulder and Neck Exercises

### Background

Exercise is one of the best ways one can improve posture. A stretching program can be used daily to help keep muscles flexible and strong. Athletes spend a great deal of time stretching before performing sports so that their bodies are prepared for their activities. We should also prepare by integrating exercise into our daily routine. Before beginning any exercise or stretching program consult your health care provider, especially if you have a pre-existing condition that may affect your ability to participate in the program.

### Benefits of a Stretching Program

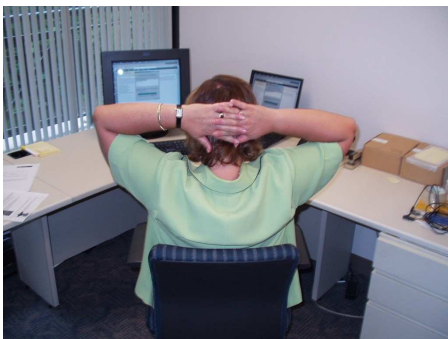
There are many benefits associated with a stretching program. They include:

- Helps prevent muscular aches, pains, and cramping
- Reduces the possibility of muscular soreness/fatigue over the next day(s)
- Provides a break from static postures
- Increases the muscles efficiency/effectiveness of movement (improving your overall speed, stamina, and form) by:
  - Enhancing the ability of muscles to contract/work more powerfully and economically
  - Improves your overall form
- Great for relaxation

### Upper Body Exercises

You can do just a few of the following exercises anytime during the day. Hold each stretch for five to ten seconds and repeat each exercise three to five times during one cycle. Holding each exercise a little longer or doing more repetitions will help to improve flexibility, strength, and endurance. When stretching, you will feel a slight pull on the muscle. If this becomes mildly uncomfortable (especially if you feel radiating pain), ease off or stop the stretch. If you have a pre-existing condition, please consult a medical professional before attempting these stretches.

### Stretch 1: Executive Stretch



1. Clasp hands behind head (elbows aligned with ears).
2. Press elbows back as far as possible, squeeze shoulder blades together.
3. Relax and repeat three times.

### Stretch 2: Head Tilt and Turn (for neck and shoulders)



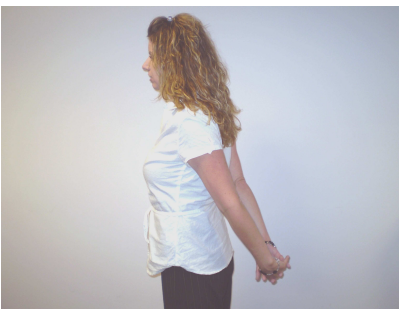
1. Lower head to shoulder, hold and repeat to other side.
2. Turn head to look over shoulder and repeat to other side.
3. Lower chin to chest and return to starting point.
4. Repeat sequence three to five times.

### Stretch 3: Shoulder and Arm Rolls



1. Roll both shoulders backward, down and around in a circular motion.
2. Repeat three to five times.

### Stretch 4: Chest Stretch



1. Lace fingers together behind your back.
2. Slowly squeeze shoulder blades together.
3. Slowly raise and straighten the arm.
4. Repeat five to ten times.

### Stretch 5: Arm Cross (shoulder stretch)



1. Place arm straight out.
2. Place other hand on elbow
3. Gently pull elbow toward your face
4. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat
5. Switch arms.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant.

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