

Healthline

4 Shoulder Stretches You Can Do at Work

What causes shoulder pain?

We tend to associate shoulder pain with sports such as tennis and baseball, or with the aftermath of moving around our living room furniture. Few would ever suspect that the cause is often something as typical and inactive as sitting at our desks.

However, it turns out that staring at our computer screens for more than eight hours a day can have an enormous effect on our shoulders' deltoid, subclavius, and trapezius muscles.

Computer work can cause shoulder pain

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons estimates that the typical computer user hits their keyboard up to 200,000 times per day.

Over the long term, these repetitive movements from a relatively stationary position for hours at a stretch can wreak havoc on your musculoskeletal health. It can lead to:

Bad posture

Headaches

Joint pain

The World Health Organization and other leading medical institutions define these types of shoulder injuries, often in combination with neck and back strain, as musculoskeletal disorders.

Exercise can help prevent shoulder pain

Thankfully, Dr. Dustin Tavenner of the Lakeshore Chiropractic and Rehabilitation Center in Chicago frequently treats people who have shoulder pain associated with long hours of sitting.

Tavenner recommends these four easy and quick shoulder stretches that you can do at work to help alleviate shoulder pain.

Desk angels

Sitting straight in your chair with perfect posture, place your arms at shoulder level with a 90-degree bend in your elbows.

Keeping your head and torso stationary, slowly move your arms overhead, reaching your hands toward the ceiling. Try to keep your arms in line with your ears as you move up to the ceiling and slowly back to the starting position.

You should feel some pulling in your midback, which helps to relax your spine.

Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder rolls

Keep your back straight and your chin tucked in.

Roll your shoulders forward, up, back, and down in a circular motion.

Repeat 10 times, then reverse.

Upper trapezius stretch

Sitting with your back straight, tilt your head sideways toward your shoulder.

For a larger stretch, drop your shoulder blade on the opposite side toward the floor.

Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat twice on each side.

Armpit stretch

This stretch will make it look like you're trying to smell your own armpit, so perhaps you should perform this one when you're sure no one is looking.

Sit with your back straight.

Rotate your head sideways so that your nose is directly above your armpit.

Hold the back of your head with your hand and use it to gently push your nose closer to your armpit.

Don't push to the point of discomfort.

Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat twice on each side.

Proceed with moderation

In addition to these stretches, "active" sitting can keep your body in motion and prevent the pain that results from being sedentary. For example, lean back in your chair occasionally, swivel your seat from side to side, and stand up for a few moments at least once every hour.

As always, be careful when adding a new exercise to your daily routine. If you continue to experience pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/shoulder-pain/stretching-at-work#takeaway>