

Three Helpful Stretches For The Busy Office Worker

ESSENTIAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

If you happen to have an office job, it can't have escaped your notice that sitting has been shown to be associated with a variety of chronic health conditions. Office jobs are one the most common forms of employment in the developed world, so here are some tips to help you stay healthy when sitting all day.

Move more often:

Sitting itself and the posture you find yourself in isn't as bad as simply being still for hours on end. An expression in physiotherapy is 'the best posture is your next posture'. This means that, above all, movement is the best thing for your body and those in office jobs can find themselves becoming very still while focused on the next deadline.

Set a quiet alarm to remind you to move or change positions every 20 minutes. Getting up for phone calls and walking over to see colleagues when you have a question is a great way to break up your sitting time.

Reverse your posture:

While not moving is definitely the worst aspect to prolonged sitting, the postures we often adopt while sitting can also be problematic. Sitting with a flattened lower back, hunched neck and slouched shoulders is the posture that requires the least energy to maintain and is often the one we sink into in a long day. A slouched posture can lead to shortened hamstring, hip flexor and pectoral muscles.

If you are spending large amounts of time sitting, it's important to take time every day to adopt the opposite postures and keep your body flexible. This means moving into thoracic and lumbar extension, stretching your shoulders and extending your hips.

Here are a few stretches you can do every day while seated that will help to reverse your posture. Try to do these stretches every few hours during a working day.

1. Chest stretch

Sit forward, clasp your hands behind your back and lift your arms towards the ceiling. You should feel a stretch at the front of your chest. Look up slightly to increase the stretch. You should not feel any pain or tingling in your arms. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat.

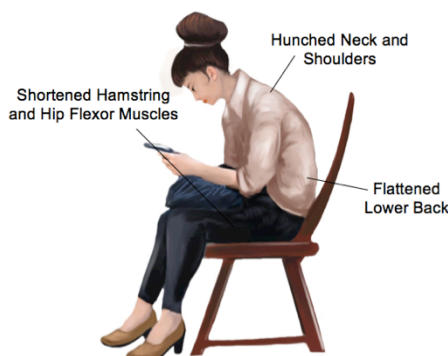
2. Seated hamstring stretch

Perch on the edge of your seat and straighten one leg out in front of you. Lean forwards at your hips, keeping your back straight. You should feel a gentle stretch at the back of your thigh. If you feel the stretch behind your knee or into your calf, let your ankle relax, and let your foot drop towards the floor. Hold the stretch for 20 second then swap legs, repeat this stretch with each leg twice.

3. Chin Tuck

Sit up in your chair so your bottom is at the back of your seat and your lower back is supported. Relax your shoulders and gently tuck your chin in, imagine you are holding a soft ball under your chin and are slowly squashing it. You should feel a gentle stretch at the top of your neck. Hold for 20 seconds, release and repeat.

You should not feel any pain with these stretches. Speak to your physiotherapist for a customised stretching routine that you can implement into your day at the office or for more tips on how to perform these stretches to maximum effect.



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Brain Teasers

1. If you toss a coin four times in a row and it lands on heads, what is the probability that it will land on heads on the next flip?

2. Michelle is 13 years old, her father, Jim, is 40 years old.

How many years ago was Jim exactly four times older than Michelle?

3. Which of the seven dwarfs never speaks?

Did You Know?

Physiotherapy and Physical Therapy the same profession, in the U.S.A physiotherapists are referred to as Physical Therapists

PhysioTip

A complete rehabilitation program following an injury will include prevention of future injuries. Finishing physiotherapy treatment before this part can lead to a higher risk of reinjury.

Anterior Ankle Impingement

What is it?

Anterior ankle impingement, also known as anterior impingement syndrome, is a musculoskeletal condition where repetitive forces compress and damage the tissues at the front of the ankle, causing pain and stiffness. It is a common injury that can affect people of all ages, however is usually seen in athletes of sports involving repetitive or forceful upward movements of the ankle, such as sprinting, landing from long jump, uphill and downhill running.

What are the symptoms?

Pain at the front of the ankle is the primary symptom of anterior ankle impingement. This can be felt as an intense, sharp pain occurring with ankle movements or a dull ache in front of the ankle following periods of exercise. Pain can also be felt when putting weight through the ankle while standing, walking or running. Night-time aching, stiffness, swelling and reduced ankle flexibility are also common symptoms of anterior ankle impingement.

How does it happen?

Anterior ankle impingement is caused by traumatic or repetitive compression to the structures at the front of the ankle as the

tibia and talus move towards each other during ankle movements. The tissues that are affected become damaged and inflamed, causing the pain typical of ankle impingement. Chronic inflammation can lead to further stiffness, exacerbating the impingement process.

The most common risk factor for ankle impingement is a previous ankle sprain that was not adequately rehabilitated, as this can result in a stiff or unstable ankle. Another cause of impingement is the growth of small osteophytes or bony spurs around the ankle joint that press against the nearby soft tissues. These can be due to osteoarthritis or grow as a reaction to impingement itself. Training errors, muscle tightness, unsupportive footwear and a hypermobile ankle have also been shown to be risk factors for anterior ankle impingement.

How can physiotherapy help?

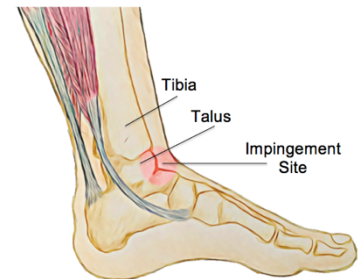
Depending on the cause, mild cases of anterior ankle impingement usually recover in one to two weeks with rest and physiotherapy intervention. For more severe impingement, the ankle may require up to six weeks of rest and rehabilitation to recover. In rare cases, surgical intervention will be required to remove any physical causes of impingement, such as osteophytes to restore impingement free movement of the ankle. Your physiotherapist will first identify the cause of your ankle impingement and help you to choose the best course of action to reduce

your symptoms. They are able to advise you on the appropriate amount of rest and provide stretches and exercises to restore strength and flexibility to the ankle.

Mobilization techniques and range of motion exercises can also reduce stiffness of the ankle, restoring normal joint movement. Moreover, balance and proprioception exercises are included to prevent further ankle injury. Balance exercises challenge the way your body reacts to outside forces. With this, your balance will be improved, and you'll have a more stable ankle.

Ideally, physiotherapy treatment is the first step before considering surgery. If surgery is required, your physiotherapist can help you to make a full recovery with a post surgical rehabilitation program.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your individual condition.



Brain Teaser Answers:

1. There is 50% chance. 2. Four years ago.

3. Dopey

Pan Seared Mushroom and Avocado Salad

Ingredients:

400g Fresh Mushrooms, halved
1 bunch Fresh Asparagus
¼ cup Parmesan Cheese, shaved
½ Tbsp. Sesame Seeds
1 Fresh Avocado
1 clove Garlic
2 wedges of Fresh Lime
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
Salt & Pepper



1. Heat a medium sized frying pan to high heat cover with 1 Tbsp. of olive oil, sprinkle salt and pepper and add 1 clove of diced garlic.
2. Cook for 1-2 minutes until garlic is slightly browned and add halved mushrooms and asparagus. Cook on medium heat until both mushrooms and asparagus are browned and slightly soft. Remove from heat and place in a medium sized mixing bowl.
3. Cut avocado into small pieces and mix gently with mushrooms and avocado. Dress salad with 1 Tbsp. of olive oil and the juice from ½ of a fresh lime.
4. Sprinkle thin slices of Parmesan cheese and sesame seeds over salad and serve.

Serves two.



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