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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

July 26, 2001 - Exercises To Keep That Good Posture

Last week I discussed the importance of maintaining good posture. When your posture is good, the chance of you experiencing chronic headaches, neck pain, upper back pain, and muscle tension decreases substantially. You will also be more productive at work and sleep better at night. The following exercises are designed to stretch the muscles that become tight and fatigued, leading to poor posture. Each of them should be done daily, especially if you are standing or sitting for long periods of time. Hold each stretch for ten seconds and do not force or bounce it.



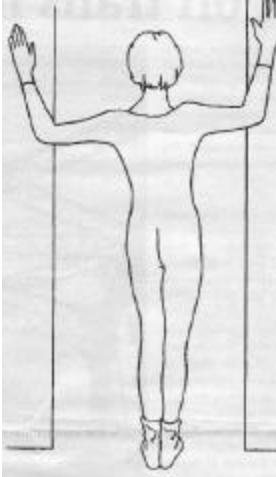
Stretch #1

Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Rotate your head and chest to one side so that at least one hand touches the back of your chair. Keep your feet planted. Once in this position, take a big breath and, on the exhalation, twist just a bit further. Hold this for ten seconds but keep breathing. Repeat both sides three times.



Stretch #2

Turn your head forty-five degrees to the right (half way between looking straight forwards and all the way to the right). Drop your head downwards. With your right hand, reach up to the top of your head and pull your head down. You are basically pointing your nose into the right armpit. Hold onto the bottom of your chair with the left hand so that the left shoulder doesn't elevate at the same time. Hold this for ten seconds on each side and repeat three times



Stretch #3

Stand inside a doorway, lift your arms, and bend your elbows at a ninety-degree angle. Slowly move forward through the doorway until your elbows end up slightly behind you. Make sure you use your stomach and lower-back muscles to hold you in the proper position. You should feel your chest muscles stretch. Keep breathing while you hold this position for ten seconds. Don't push too hard and definitely don't bounce. Repeat three times.

These are basic postural muscle stretches. If you wish to have a more comprehensive list, you should make an appointment to see a Chiropractor or Certified Personal Trainer.