

Desk Therapy 101!

HOW TO COUNTERACT THE EFFECTS OF CHRONIC SITTING





FULL-TIME DESK DRIVING

takes an enormous toll on the human body. Tight muscles, locked joints, and reduced blood flow creates new aches and pains while exacerbating pre-existing ones, and the truth is, these noticeable effects are just the beginning. Our bodies, and more specifically—your body—is meant to move.

Through this guide, our aim is to provide you with the tools you need to begin loosening chronically tight “desk muscles,” in order to prevent the negative effects of long-term sitting, while improving your overall quality of life. EVERYONE needs to be mobilizing, especially those with sedentary jobs. Getting started is easier than you might think.

Use these quick, simple exercises to stay loose, limber, and pain-free for the long haul. Please note, this isn't meant to be an end-all guide but rather a sample from the full training found in the GymnasticBodies Online Courses.





Why Does Sitting at a Desk Cause Tightness in the Body?

Your entire body quickly molds to the position it spends the most time in. Everything from head to toe will change and adapt in favor of the position you frequent most. Without sufficient amounts of movement, your body will make the physical transition toward regular sitting, causing you to get tight and stiff.

Thankfully, our bodies are just as adaptable and sensitive to mobilization and care as they are to sedentary life. All you need to do to win the battle is overpower desk time with potent and easy to execute mobilization drills. You'll be amazed at how quickly just a few short minutes a day changes the way you feel, at your desk and everywhere else life takes you. Over the days and weeks, minutes add up to hours, and those hours result in an improved you.

The Desk Therapy drills from this guide, coupled with things like frequent walking or standing breaks, a regular exercise routine (check out our online courses for more at-home workouts), and even simple upgrades like investing in a standing desk, are your recipe for a healthier, better feeling body.



OVERCOMING TIGHT MUSCLES Through “Desk Therapy”

SIMPLE DAILY DESK THERAPY DRILLS



FULL CARPAL MOBILITY

Exercise: Wrist Circles

To begin this first exercise, stand up and interlock your fingers, making a ball with your hands. Next, keeping a tight grip between your hands, begin moving your wrists around in circles. Feel free to walk around while you perform the circles.

Continue for 30 seconds in one direction, switch, and circle the opposite way for 30 more. This simple wrist mobility is a great way to relieve some of the stress caused by repetitive typing.

SITTING IS NOT THE NEW SMOKING.

Here's why: you can smoke and smoke and smoke and no matter your other habits, you're still at a much higher risk for smoking related health issues. The same is not true for desk work. There are an incredible amount of relatively simple strategies that can be used to counteract the negative impact that desk work can have on your body and health. We're going to cover some specific exercises in this guide that we call prehabilitation (prehab) exercises, to help your body ward off some of the demands of sitting.

If you sit all day long, neglecting movement and mobility, then you're in for a pretty miserable surprise. If you don't care for your body, then your fate as a stiff, suffering "zombie" is surely sealed. Lucky for you, it is quite simple to implement desk therapy and, soon enough, it'll be a regular habit that will grant you a more vibrant livelihood.

RELIEVE FROZEN TENDONS

Exercise: Wrist Extension Stretch

Standing over your desk or breakroom table, place your hands flat on the surface, fingertips on the edge, facing you. Straighten your elbows if possible and lean back, bring your shoulders behind your fingertips or as far back as you can get them. Do your best to keep your elbows straight!

Hold or pulse back and forth lightly for 30 seconds.





DON'T NEGLECT THE FINGERS

Exercise: First Knuckle Stretch

Another desk therapy essential! Start by placing your hands together in a prayer-like position. Now, pressing your fingers together strongly, pull your palms apart, lifting your elbows and forearms higher. The goal is to stretch your first knuckle (the knuckle that forms the base of your fingers).

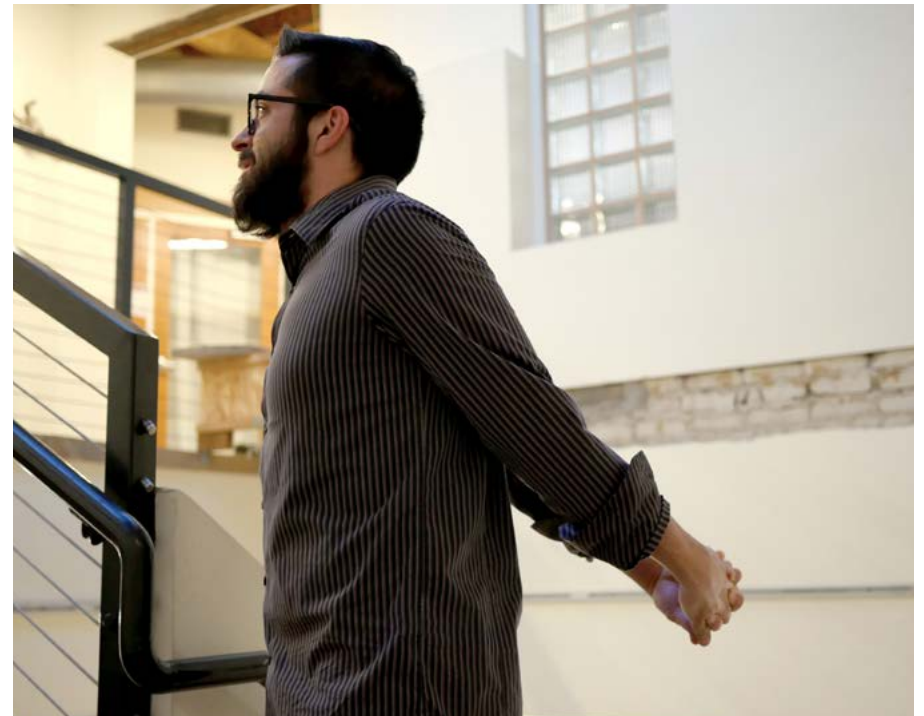
Hold or pulse for 30 seconds. Over time, work to achieve a 90-degree angle at your first knuckle!

REVIVE YOUR POSTURE

Exercise: Standing Shoulder Extension

Stand up and interlock your fingers again, but this time do it behind your body. Next, open your chest by pulling your shoulders back and work to straighten your elbows. If you can't straighten them just yet, don't worry. Your body will quickly loosen up with regular practice. Your goal is to eventually be able to keep your elbows straight as you lift your hands up to shoulder height.

Be sure to pull your shoulders back, opening the chest and squeezing shoulder blades together during these. We want to open those areas as they are extremely susceptible to tightness and can oftentimes be the source of shoulder, back, and neck pain. Enjoy the refreshing break from having your hands in front of you all day long. Perform a hold or pulse up and down for 30 seconds before releasing your hands.



OPTIMIZE BLOOD FLOW

Exercise: Wall Angels (Ahem...Devils)

Setting Up: Stand with your back against a wall and place your heels 6-8 inches away. Bend your knees slightly, engage your core, and attempt to get your entire back to lay flat against the wall, from head to hips. Next, bring your arms up next to you, palms out, and do your best to press your shoulders, elbows, hands, and wrists into the wall. Your elbows can be bent between 45 and 90-degrees. Don't forget to keep your back pressed flat, especially the tricky-to-keep-down lower back!

Execution: Keeping everything pressed against the wall as best you can, slowly squat down, sliding your back down the wall. Keep your hands and arms at the same location, simply squatting/sliding below them. Slide back up to your starting position, check for complete upper body-to-wall contact, and repeat for a total of 5 repetitions.



Disclaimer

If you ever begin suffering from any pain, always consult a doctor. Never attempt to self-diagnose and treat injury or pain on your own. Getting a professional opinion is the best thing you can do to overcome the issue and return to normal health.



Scheduling Your Desk Therapy

Daily practice of these exercises is completely safe and acceptable. It may be helpful for you to set an alarm on your phone, reminding you to take a short break and perform them. Breaking them up throughout the day or performing them in a single sequence are both perfectly fine ways to perform these drills. These Desk Therapy drills will undoubtedly change the way you feel and move. Enjoy!

Other Desk Therapy Strategies

Our wrists, forearms, shoulders, and back are not the only areas that can be negatively affected by regular desk work. Areas below the waist, especially the hips, are also hit hard by chronic sitting. Be sure to look into our other e-books and arm yourself with more desk therapy. Our hip stretches, weighted mobility drills, strengthening exercises, and [Online Courses](#) will keep your body functioning at its best.

Also remember that during your work day it is incredibly important to change positions regularly. Consider working at a standing desk and even look into items like specially made keyboards designed to promote healthier wrists and hands.

A person wearing a dark blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt is shown from the side, with their right arm extended and hand resting flat against a textured, light brown wall. The background is slightly blurred, showing a metal railing and a white wall. The overall lighting is soft and natural.

Wrap-up

These Desk Therapy exercises are just the beginning of what you can do for your health and your body. Don't sentence yourself to suffering from unnecessary tightness, aches, and pains caused by your desk job. Combat the issues, or better yet, prevent them from ever occurring by keeping up with these essential Desk Therapy exercises and more from GymnasticBodies.

If you're new to working out or have done only a small amount of it, have limited mobility, and need a gentle, low-intensity introduction to GymnasticBodies Fitness, start with our [Fundamentals Course](#). No matter your current abilities or level of fitness, Fundamentals will gently ease you into exercise with daily, at-home friendly lessons, which will cover the strategies discussed in this guide and much more.

“The journey to self actualization only gets tougher and ever more demanding, as those initial moments of enthusiasm fade, and we are left with only the strength of our individual resolve to overcome our very human and seemingly unlimited ability to procrastinate.”

- Coach Christopher Sommer,
Owner and Founder of GymnasticBodies