

Workout At Your Desk

Why Does Repetitive Stress Happen

- 1) We can break-up the back into three sections. Upper (Trapezius and Shoulder Girdle which includes rotator cuff), Mid (Lats, Teres, and Rhomboids), and Lower (Erector Spinae). The main reason for pain in these areas comes from the defense mechanism built into muscles. When a muscle senses it is being overstretched, either from an exaggerated reach or maintaining a stretch for a period of time, it tightens and spasms. This is what is causing the discomfort that is being experienced.
- 2) The stretching of the muscle is due largely to posture, primarily leaning forward to type. Ideal posture will be sitting upright with the back against the back of the chair and the abdominals tight, the elbows straight down from the shoulder, and 90° angles at the elbow, hip, and knees.
- 3) The muscle tightening is also compounded by dehydration, poor nutrition (in particular not enough calories per day to recover), low strength/endurance levels, and not stretching regularly. These all decrease the ability of the muscles to recover.

What Can Be Done

Anything that brings blood and nutrients to the muscle will help recovery. Massage, alternating ice and heat, making sure you are getting enough nutrients through proper nutrition and water intake, and stretching. Making sure the muscle is strong enough for the task is also critical.

To make sure you are getting plenty of water. Divide your body weight in pounds by 2. This is the minimum ounces of water required per day. Add 8 oz. of every 15 minutes of activity and an extra ounce for each ounce of alcoholic, caffeinated, or carbonated beverage.

Consume enough calories. The average man needs 2,500 per day, the average woman 2,200.

Strengthen the muscle through the full range (dynamic). Isometric contractions only strengthen at one joint angle.

Large muscle groups (legs, back, chest) require 48-96 hours to recover and small muscle groups (shoulders, arms, calves, and abdominals) require 24-48 hours.

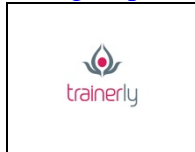
Exercises and Stretching At Your Desk

- 1) While sitting in your chair, move slowly so you can feel the muscles on the top of your thigh contract to extend your legs so your knees are locked. Hold for two seconds at the top. Contract the muscles on the back of your thighs to bring your feet back to the floor. Bring them down so the heels come behind your knee. When your heels touch the floor, contract hard and hold for two seconds. Repeat 10 times.
- 2) Hold your feet off the floor. Contract your calf to point your toes. Move your foot slowly in a circle pulling the toes back towards your shin at the top of the circle and pointing them at the bottom. Perform 10 repetitions and repeat with the other leg.

- 3) Grab the edge of the desk. Using your back, pull yourself in as close to the desk as you can pinching the shoulder blades together. Push your self back to arms length and repeat 10 times. While sitting in a comfortable position, perform 10 shoulder circles.
- 4) With your arms at your side, lift the directly away from your body until they are parallel to the floor. Contract the muscles as hard as you can. Perform 10 repetitions. Let your arms hang at your side. Turn the palms so they face up. Curl your arms up so your hand moves towards your shoulder. Turn the palms down and press them back to a straight position. Perform 10 repetitions.
- 5) Sitting in an upright position, contract your abdominals and press your lower back against your seat back. Hold as long as possible. Repeat 10 times.
- 6) Perform your stretches at least once every day.

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