



Personal exercise program office workers

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THORACIC EXTENSION MOBILISATION

Purpose: To mobilise the thoracic spine in to extension.

If you have a tendency to slump or you sit a lot this is a lovely way to stretch out your thoracic spine. Thoracic spines often feel stiff. This is a simple way to get back some movement.

Roll up a medium sized bath towel and place it vertically and in a T shape below two pillows.

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1. Lie on your back with your head on the pillows and the towel stretching vertically from the nape of your neck to just below shoulder blades. Make sure your pelvis is not being pushed into an arch - you need to try to tip your pelvis back so the small of your back is flat on the floor (to avoid over-arching). Also make sure that you soften your breastbone down towards your pubic bone because if it is pushed up it will increase the arch in your back.

2. Lie on the towel and relax - you should feel a stretch between your shoulder blades. Make sure your head is well supported and that you do not feel dizzy or sick - if you do then stop immediately and add a third pillow.

3. Rest the backs of your hands on your forehead to increase the stretch.

4. To make the stretch slightly stronger read a book and you will find the weight of the book adds a bit of overpressure. It also makes the process more enjoyable! Try and stay like that for a few minutes.

Note: Also use the same rolled vertical towel in the back of their chair or car seat and automatically this helps support the thoracic spine and also the neck and shoulders in a good neutral position without having to put in much effort.



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An alternative way to get some thoracic extension is to stretch over the back of a dining or hard chair. It helps to have a towel draped over the back of the chair and then to tuck your low back in to a neutral position. Rest your hands behind your head and stretch back over the chair.



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Then move your bottom forward on the chair and stretch again so that you get slightly lower down on your spine. Move your bottom forward again to get lower down and stretch again.



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THORACIC ROTATION

Purpose: To increase thoracic rotation.

Thoracic rotation is a movement we tend not to make full use of particularly if you have lost some extension. So doing the following exercises is a must!

1. Sit with knees bent in front of you.
2. Place your left elbow on the outside of your right knee and turn towards the right. Use your elbow to push on your knee to get some overpressure. You should feel a nice stretch in your thoracic spine. Think about breathing from your lower ribs.
3. Change to the other side and repeat a few times on each side.



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Modification: Sit on a chair and using the back of the chair pull yourself round gently. Make sure your lower back is in neutral and that the rotation comes from your thoracic and not lumbar spine.



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THE CAT

Purpose: To encourage the trunk to move through full range of flexion and extension in four point kneeling using trunk stabilising muscles.

This is a nice safe way to start mobilising your back.

1. Start on hands and knees with your shoulders over your hands and hips over your knees.
2. Flatten your thoracic spine and lengthen in your neck by tucking your chin under.
4. Slowly tuck your tail under and start to flex your spine from tail to top! Imagine a wave is rolling up your spine or that your back is arching up like a cat.
5. Flatten your low back and then thoracic spine until you are back to your start position and then gently dip down between your shoulders. Take care not to go too far down with your low back.



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SITTING POSTURE Purpose: To find good sitting posture. 1. Sit on a chair. Put your hand on your back. Many people sit up too straight so increasing their lumbar curve and putting the back muscles in a shortened position. See what this does. Sit up as straight as you can. You will feel your back muscles tighten. Now relax your pelvis down slightly to the point where your back muscles relax. 2. Lift from your upper breast bone.



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Think length in your spine. Imagine you have a helium balloon that is gently pulling you up from your head.