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Desktop Yoga™ Sampler
Adapted from Julie T. Lusk's Book
Desktop Yoga™ The Anytime, Anywhere Relaxation Program

Just like your computer needs a screen saver, your body needs a body-saver. Here is a well-rounded set of yoga-based exercises that can be done right from your chair at work, home, or in your car. They're perfect for "Internet addicts, office workers, and stressed out students." Julie's Desktop Yoga™ book contains over 100 easy-to-follow stretches to help your back, neck, shoulders, face, hands and feet; breathing techniques to increase your concentration, improve your sense of inner balance, and aid your circulation; power napping exercises to improve energy by "taking a 2 hour nap in 2 minutes" and proven wellness and stress management strategies that work.

Three Part Breathing: Breathing deeply and fully is essential to yoga. It will help you relax and replenish your energy. Begin by releasing all the air from your lungs through your nose. Use your abdominal muscles to squeeze all the air out. Slowly and smoothly breathe in through your nose so you can feel your belly filling followed by an expansion around your entire rib cage (front, back and sides). Finally allow the air to fill the collarbone area. Release all the air slowly through your nose as you empty your lungs as completely as possible. Continue Three Part Breathing for as long as you comfortably can.

Neck Stretch. Sit up straight and allow your shoulders to relax. Let your right ear move toward your right shoulder. Only move it as far as it comfortably can without force. Take a few full breaths. Just as your muscles begin to tire, take a breath in and bring your head back up to the center.

Next, let your left ear slowly move toward your left shoulder and take a few more breaths. Then, bring your head back to center on an in-breath. It is common for one side to feel more limber than the other side.

Moving your head from side to side can be repeated several times. While doing this, imagine all the stress and strain that's held around your neck releasing and letting go.

Next, let your chin glide down to your chest and take a few breaths. Remember to let it go as far as it comfortably can without strain. When ready, bring your head to center.

Do not move your head backward. It puts too much stress on that area of your neck.

Shoulder Shrug: Let your arms relax at your sides. Bring both shoulders up toward your ears while you breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth as you let your shoulders drop back down. Really let go. It's fine to repeat this a few more times. This releases frustrations as well as shoulder tension.

Energy Stretch: Place both feet flat on the floor and let your arms hang to your sides. As you breathe in slowly, begin raising your arms straight out in front of you until they are shoulder height. Still breathing in, bring your arms out to both sides and then raise them over your head.

Breathe out as you lower your arms back down to your sides. Continue on for several deep diaphragmatic breaths. The trick here is to raise your arms during the time it takes to take a breath in and to lower your arms during the time it takes to breathe out.

Palming: Rub your hands rapidly together with your palms and fingers touching.

Keep doing it so that you feel some heat and energy being generated. Next, rest your elbows on your desk. Cup your hands and gently place them over your closed eyes. Let the warmth and darkness soothe your eyes. Take several long and easy breaths as you imagine the tiredness being released with your out-breath, and energy and vitality returning with your in-breath.

Hand Helpers: First make a tight fist and feel the tension. Then, let go and release all the tension and tightness. Repeat.

Stretch your fingers and palms out as much as you can. Take your time to really feel the stretch. Let your hands and fingers relax gently on your lap for several moments.

Hold your arms out in front of you and bend your wrists so your fingers point to the sky. Next, point them toward the earth. Repeat, and don't forget to breathe.

Cat Stretch: Make sure your chair is pushed away from your desktop so that you can sit on your chair and stretch both arms and hands straight out toward the desk. Place your fingers on the desktop or on your knees.

Next, lower your head as you arch your back up (just like a Halloween cat) while breathing out. On the next in-breath, raise your head and chest up while you curve and stretch your back in the other direction. Don't strain. Continue up and down, breathing in and out as you go. Rest and relax for a few moments with your arms resting on your lap.

Foot Rolls: Kick your shoes off, stretch your legs out in front of you and begin moving your feet around in a big circle. Let your feet, ankles and calves get in on the act. Are you still breathing? Now circle your feet around in the other direction. Rest.

Next, point your toes forward and then back toward your head. Do this several times in a row. Rest.

Then, lift your legs up and move the balls of your feet from side to side. Stretch your toes and relax all over.

Julie Lusk, M.Ed. is available to speak about Desktop Yoga™ and a variety of wellness and mind/body topics at your special event. Contact Julie at 513-576-6662 for details. Her Desktop Yoga™ book and guided relaxation CDs are available through Whole Person Press (1-800-247-6789) and online at WholesomeResources.com.

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