

Wellness @ Work: Incorporating Health Promotion into the Workplace

March 4, 2014 | Bonnie McCoy's Session: Don't just sit there!

"Don't just sit there!" was a 15 minute pre-lunch "get out of your seat, stretch and move" session. It was designed to unseat participants and get them moving, stretching, increasing their physical and postural awareness and breathing. Participants learned workstation exercises and tips for sitting properly that they could take back to their workplaces and use every day.

Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider.

1) Exercise Session

- Stand with postural awareness: lift your spine and ribcage, expand your ribs with inspiration
- Breathe in, stretch upward: on the toes and balance (lift your spine and ribcage, and expand your ribcage with each breath in)
- Breathe in, stretch upward: reach one arm higher and repeat on second side
- Shoulder shrugs: relax your back, neck, and shoulders
- Shoulder rolls to the back
- Rotate your neck to right and left and repeat
- Gently rotate your trunk to right and left and repeat (optional)
- Toe rocker: heels up, then toes up, shifting weight
- Side shift (broad stance, reach arms out to side, close forward and open out again)
- Split stance shift (forward and back, change sides) and cross country ski arms
- Spine flexion/extension: hip width stance, slight bend in your knees, lean forward and down to table top back, then pull belly button to spine and lift into cat stretch, moving up slowly link by link of spine; open your chest, extend your back gently with your abdominals contracted; add open chest stretch with wrist flexion/extension, hands behind head for extra shoulder/chest stretch; repeat
- Test of shoulder flexibility
- Ribcage reach with breathing awareness, then tilt down on either side
- Chair hip flexor/thigh stretch (optional)
- Chair double hamstrings/calf stretch
- Chair neck stretches: relax your jaw, facial muscles, fingers, and hands

2) Sitting at Your Workstation

- Place your feet flat on floor about hip width apart, on or off a foot rest. Avoid crossing your legs.
- Your low back may be lightly supported on the back of the chair, or not. You can also instead sit on a stability ball, backless stool, or stand or use a treadmill workstation.
- Avoid leaning forward. Aim to sit up vertically as if a string is on the top of your head lifting you upward. Try to lift your spine and ribcage, while engaging your abdominals.
- Your arms should be close to your sides and may rest on an arm rest at the proper level—elbows at a 90 degree angle, with your shoulders relaxed.
- For more information on the health hazards of sitting, please see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/health/sitting/Sitting.pdf>.