



STRETCH BREAK



The Challenge

We all know that physical activity is important, but we often overlook stretching. Whether at a desk or in a car, many of us sit for long periods throughout the day. But our bodies are not designed for prolonged periods of sedentary behaviour! It can be difficult to remember to stretch when you're in the zone. This activity encourages employees to take mini stretch breaks throughout the day.

Resources Required

- *Emails with calendar invites to all employees.*
- *Visible locations to post stretching guides.*

Measures of Success

- *Participation and feedback from staff.*

Fun Twists

- *Meet in a common space to stretch together as a group.*
- *Schedule in stretch breaks during meetings to break up sitting.*

PROCESS

CREATE CHALLENGE

1 Develop itinerary

*Using the **Stretching Guide** as a reference, create an itinerary for daily stretching. This could look like:*

Monday – Head tilt, shoulder shrug and hand pull

Tuesday – Neck rotation, triceps, leg and ankle stretch

2 PROMOTE CHALLENGE

Try to time it for mid-day when most employees have been sitting for a while

*Send out a 5-minute recurring meeting request as a reminder to stretch daily. Include your stretch itinerary and attach the **Stretching Guide** to explain the stretches.*

Success Story

Staff at the Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites carry out varying levels of physical activity throughout the day. Some are very active (housekeeping and restaurant) whereas others are more sedentary (administration and front desk). The housekeeping team implemented a pre-shift stretch routine and the restaurant staff posted a “quick stretches” guide in the staff room.

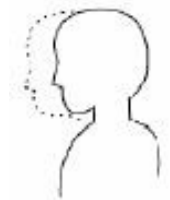


STRETCHING GUIDE

Neck Stretches

HEAD TILT

In a standing or seated position, gently tilt your head down, chin towards the chest. Exhale as your head moves down. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Gently bring your head back up. Repeat 5-10 times.

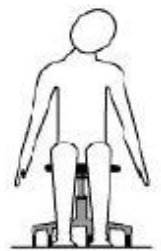


NECK RELAXER

Sit or stand with your back straight. Inhale, and exhale, gently tilting your head to bring your right ear towards your right shoulder. Repeat this exercise to the opposite side.

NECK ROTATION

Once your head is tilted to one side, ear facing shoulder, slowly roll your head down towards your chest then up to the opposite shoulder. Repeat 3-5 times.



Shoulder Stretches



SHOULDER SHRUG

Raise your shoulders to your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders into their normal position. Repeat two or three times.

SHOULDER ROLL

Roll your shoulders. Raise them, pull them back, then drop them back down and relax. Repeat this exercise in the opposite direction as well.

Wrist Stretches



Extend arm straight out in front of you. Flip palm up, finger tips pointing up. Take opposite hand and push on fingers. You should feel a slight pull in the wrist and forearm. Repeat the same stretching motion with your fingers pointing down.

HAND PULL



STRETCHING GUIDE

Hand & Arm Stretches

TRICEPS

Put your arm behind you with your hand pointing down. Pull on your elbow to stretch your triceps.

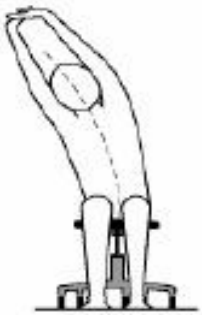


FINGER STRETCH

Start with your hand open. Stretch fingers out as far as you can. Close hand into fist. Repeat 3-5 times.



Back Stretches



SIDE STRETCH

Sitting straight up in your chair, extend your arms up. Stretch your arms up as high as you can. Then bend slightly to one side. Bend to the other side while keeping arms stretched high as you bend.

THE TWIST

Sitting up straight in your chair, gently twist your upper body at the waist to the right, making sure not to move your hips. Repeat on to the left side. Exhale (breath out) as you twist. Repeat 2-3 times.

Leg Stretches

Sitting upright in your chair, extend one leg straight out in front of you. Flex foot, toes pointing toward you. Hold for 3-5 seconds as you take a deep breath.

From this position, roll your ankle in one direction by drawing a small circle with your toes. Change directions.



LEG & ANKLE STRETCH