

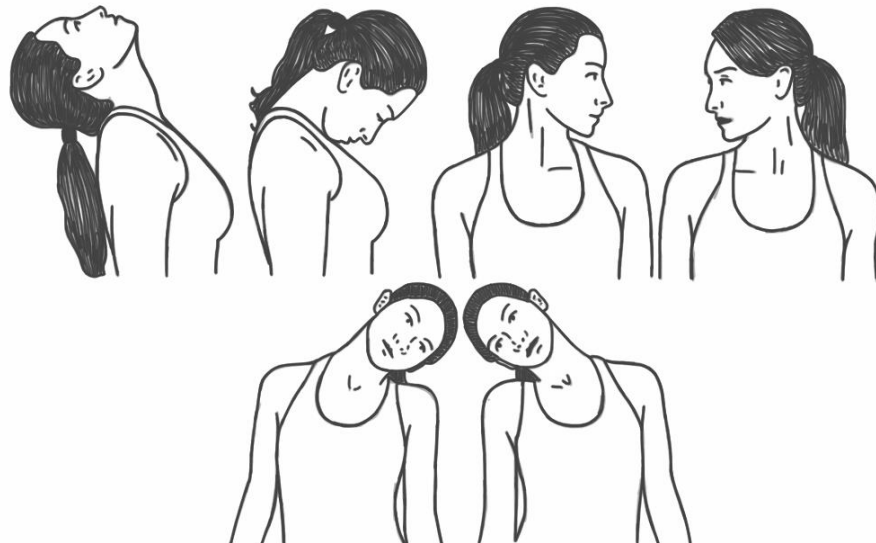


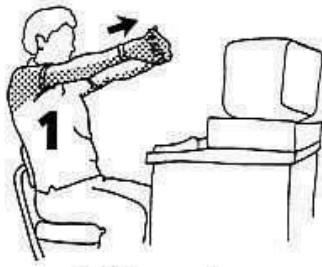
# Stretching Exercises

We are at our healthiest when our muscles are smooth and relaxed. However, the stress of life can often lead to tension in our muscles. When muscles are tense, we can feel uncomfortable, develop headaches, stiff necks, and/or sore backs. Sitting for long periods of time... typing on the computer, writing a paper, reading a textbook... can lead to muscle tension and muscle aches. When our physical bodies are in pain, we often have far more difficulty focusing and completing the task in front of us with high quality.

It is vital for our physical and emotional health, and our body comfort, to pay attention to how our muscles are feeling at a particular moment. Then we can engage in some gentle stretching and movement to release muscle tension and improve blood flow. In that way we will feel better and be more successful with focus and task completion.

So, break up long study/work sessions with 5 minutes of stretching. That will bring you both immediate comfort and help to lessen chronic build-up of muscle tension. Some of these can be done while sitting, others require stepping away from your study chair. Be sure to do the exercises slowly and gently, with mindful breathing.





10-20 seconds  
2 times



10-15 seconds



8-10 seconds  
each side



15-20 seconds



3-5 seconds  
3 times



10-12 seconds  
each arm



10 seconds



10 seconds



8-10 seconds  
each side



8-10 seconds  
each side



10-15 seconds  
2 times



Shake out hands  
8-10 seconds



### Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS)

3 Garrison Avenue, Smith Hall - 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Durham, NH 03824

Tel: 603-862-2090 Website: [www.unh.edu/pacs](http://www.unh.edu/pacs)