

Alleviate Your Computer Posture Discomfort with these Six Postural Exercises

by Julie Bacon

Below are six isometric exercises (some strengthen and some relax) that can banish your discomfort and improve your posture for these specific areas:

- Neck (Forward Head Posture)
- Upper Trapezius
- Middle Trapezius (Forward Shoulder Posture)
- Descending Trapezius (Shoulders curled Forward/Down)
- Thoracic Erectors (Excessive Kyphotic Curve in Thoracic Spine)

What's so great about these exercises is that each one can be done using your body's weight, just ONE time, for as long as you can hold it (to fatigue).



Neck Isometric (neck tension)

Perform a forward bend. Lace your fingers together and extend arms over your back/head as far as possible. Without changing your position, lift your head up in opposition. Pit these two actions against each other for 20 seconds; return to standing (slowly).



Shoulder Shrug (upper trapezius)

While standing, lift your shoulders as high as you can, and contract your muscles so hard that they're trembling. Continue for 20 seconds, then lower slowly.



Modified Superman (descending fibers of trapezius)

Lie on your stomach (rest your forehead on the floor), extend arms out in front of you. Extend your upper arms are at about 45 degrees; point your forearms straight forward. Lift your arms off the floor and hold to fatigue.



Iron Cross (middle fibers of trapezius)

Lying prone (resting forehead on floor), stretch your arms out to the side, perpendicular to your body like in an iron cross position (the gymnastic feat on the rings). Make a fist, turn your thumbs up toward the ceiling and lift your arms off the floor, squeeze your shoulder blades together. Make sure your arms stay perpendicular to your body and hold to fatigue.



Swan Dive (thoracic erectors and more!)

Lying prone with arms down at sides, lift head, neck & chest off the floor; squeeze shoulders together while externally rotating arms by sticking thumbs out like a hitch-hiker; hold to fatigue. This one relaxes the cervical & lumbar erectors while strengthening the thoracic erectors!



Restorative Yoga Pose (this is your big reward!)

Restorative Yoga Pose (this is your big reward!) Using a bolster, yoga block or rolled up towel, position it horizontally, directly below the bottom edge of your shoulder blades. (If your neck is uncomfortable, place folded towel under your head.) Resting in this position for up to 5 minutes lets the force of gravity reverse the effects it has on our spines when we are upright (it bends us backward).