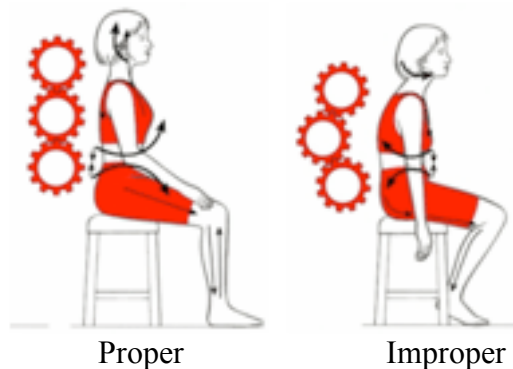




## Fitness Tips for the Office

**Tip #1 – Sit in Proper Posture (Figure 1):** Slumping in your chair (Figure 2) may feel better at times, but in the long term, your body will pay for it. This position puts a lot of strain on your spine, causing more pressure on the disks between the vertebrae and possibly leading to injury.



**Tip #2 – Adjust Your Computer:** Be sure you are not straining your neck to look down or up at your computer monitor. It should be visible by looking straight ahead.

**Tip #3 – Switch Ears:** If you are constantly on the telephone with the receiver to the same ear, be sure to switch sides often. If you rest the phone on your shoulder, failure to switch sides can cause muscle imbalances, tension headaches, and neck & shoulder stiffness.

**Tip #4 – Remodel Your Work Area:** Periodically rearrange your work area, especially items you frequently reach for. This will prevent your body from developing muscle imbalances due to repetitive stress.

**Tip #5 – Prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:** Throughout the day, frequently stretch your fingers (spread them apart and flex and extend them) and your wrists (flex and extend them, and move them in circular motions) to prevent chronic strain.

**Tip #6 – Take Mini-Breaks:** Sitting in the same position all day can cause a lack of circulation throughout your body and place your spine in a prolonged state of compression. Short breaks intermittently throughout the day will help to restore circulation and decompress your spine.

**Tip #7 – Stretch Your Muscles:** Certain muscles tend to tense up for people who spend the day sitting. These muscles include those of the neck, shoulders, hips and back. Perform the following office stretches as frequently as possible throughout the day.

### **Neck and Shoulder Stretch**

Seated in optimal posture, tuck your chin inward and slowly flex and rotate your head in the direction of your opposite pocket while moving your shoulder blade back and down on the side being stretched. Hold each stretch position for 30s.



### **Shoulder Stretch**

Standing in front of a sturdy object, place one arm on the object. Through abdominal control, attempt a posterior tilt, thus rounding the low back. While maintaining the rounded low back, slowly move your body backwards until slight tension is felt. Hold for 30 seconds.



### **Hip/Back Stretch**

Begin in a standing position with the stretch leg behind the forward leg and *rotated inward*. To start the stretch, tighten your buttocks and rotate your pelvis under while maintaining an upright posture. Slowly stride forward until tension is felt. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.



**Tip #8 – Perform Mini-Exercises:** Performing exercises to strengthen or simply to move your body will be helpful. Use the following exercises daily.

### **Seated Posture Challenge**

Without using the back rest, sit with your feet flat on the floor and pointed straight ahead. Keep your chest up, your shoulders back, and your palms facing forward. Take four deep breaths from your belly while concentrating on relaxing as you exhale.



### **Total Body Squat with Rotation**

Place circular tubing around your thighs (optional). Under control, squat downward and rotate your body toward one side, keeping your knees aligned over the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> toes. To return, push through the heel, activate your glutes, and rotate back while standing upright until your hips and knees are straight. Repeat this movement up to 20 times.



### **Cobra**

Lay prone on the floor with your legs straight and your abdominals drawn inward. Tuck your chin, activate your buttocks, and pinch your shoulder blades together, lifting your chest off the floor while moving your arms out and around to the sides of your body. Hold this position for 2 seconds and slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 12 times.



**Tip # 9 – Lunch Breaks...Not Just For Lunch:** Walk to a nearby restaurant, roller blade, go to a nearby gym, walk for half of your lunch hour, et cetera. Move as much as possible. It reduces physical and emotional stress, and provides a great way to stay in shape.

**Tip #10 – Fuel your body:** Drink plenty of fluids. This will keep your body hydrated and working most efficiently. Also, eat small meals at regular intervals throughout the day to fuel your body properly. You will feel more energetic and not be hungry. Thus, you will be more efficient at work, which will make your boss happy.

**By: NASM Editorial Staff**