



Table of Contents

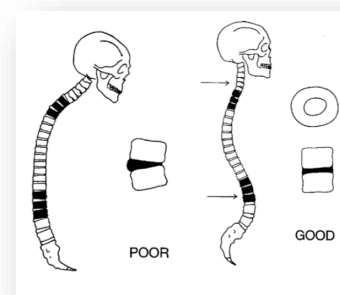
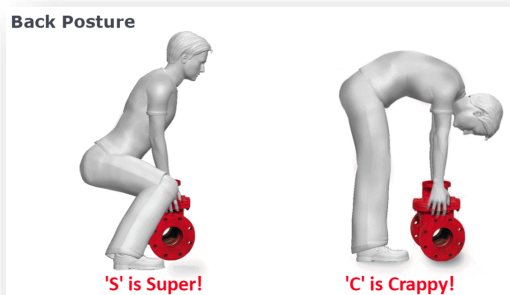
Movement Breaks	2
Office - Movement Break Exercises	4
Upper Body Movements	4
Lower body movements	5
Full Body Movements	6
Postural Exercise: Wall Angels	7
Functional Activities at Home and Everyday	8
Vision and Mental Health Breaks	9



Movement Breaks

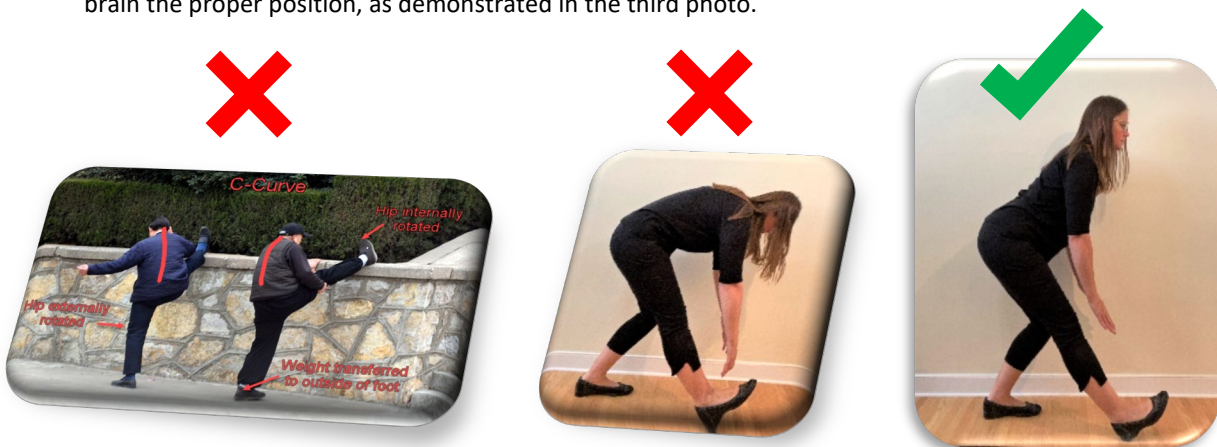
When performing movement breaks and exercises, use good posture, be aware of fatigue causing poor movement patterns, and ensure the exercise or activity is within your health and fitness level. If you have a health condition, contact your Health Care Provider prior to engaging in exercise. Incorporate work appropriate, injury specific exercises, from your Health Care Provider into your day.

Proper technique is extremely important to help decrease risk of injury. If you are unsure, ask an exercise professional to ensure you are completing the activity with proper form. Maintain good posture throughout the movement.



[EWI Works'](#) diagrams above compare poor and proper spinal posture.

Example below: The first photo depicts a stretch that is too advanced for the participants' flexibility. The second photo demonstrates poor form. Choose activities within your abilities to help train your body and brain the proper position, as demonstrated in the third photo.



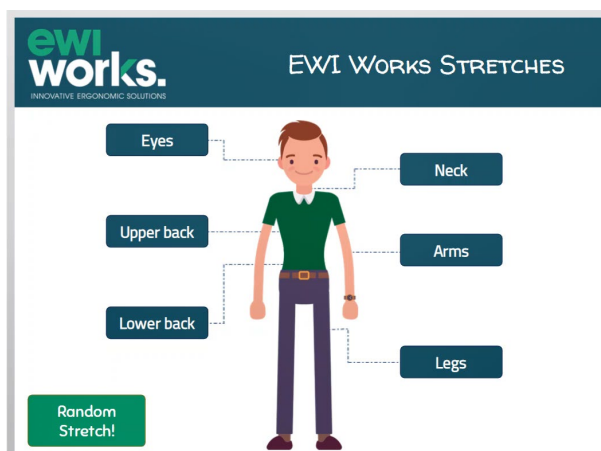
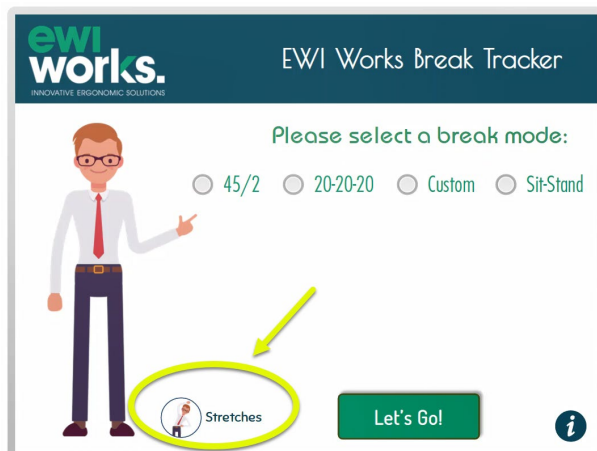


UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

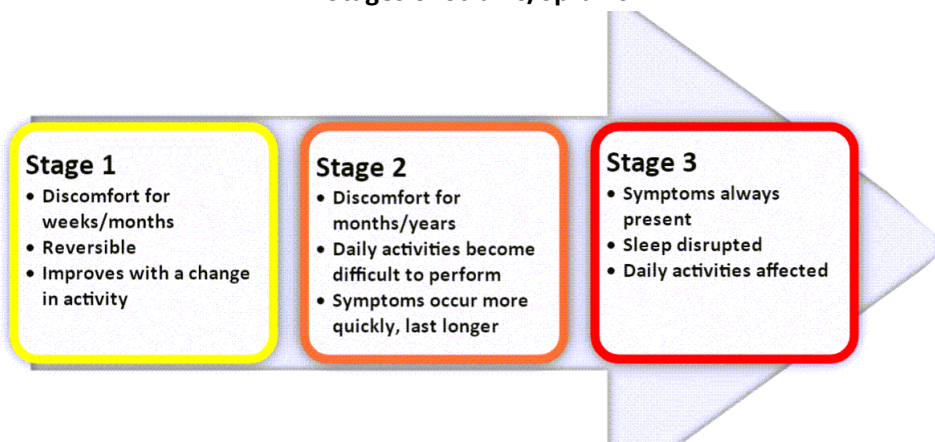
MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

Use the [EWI Works Break Tracker Stretching Tool](#) for area specific exercises or a variety of exercises.



Use the [EWI Works Break Tracker](#) for micro-break reminders or set an alarm on your phone/computer.

Stages of Strains/Sprains



EWI Works Diagrams <https://www.ewiworks.com/>

Asymptomatic (healthy populations): complete a variety of movement exercises within your health and fitness level.

Stage 1 populations: perform a variety of exercises, with a focus on area specific exercises, to help manage symptoms.

Stage 2 & 3 populations: complete injury specific exercises provided by your Health Care Provider.

Proactive Ergonomic Program

WellBeing and WorkLife – Mental Health



Office - Movement Break Exercises

Movement Break Goal: increase blood flow, decrease stiffness, and provide a vision and mental break.

In the office, incorporate some of the following movements and screen break activities into your workday. Remember to consider your health and fitness level to determine the level of intensity and or activity type. If you have a health condition, contact your healthcare provider prior to engaging in exercise.

Upper Body Movements



A) Trunk side flexion: sitting or standing, lengthen your spine into neutral posture, reach one arm overhead and bend to the opposite side, hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 - 5 on each side.

B) Trunk Rotation: sitting or standing, lengthen your spine into neutral posture, rotate/twist to one side, hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 - 5 on each side.

C) Upper back: sitting or standing, lengthen your spine into neutral posture, interlock fingers and stretch shoulders and upper back forward, hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 – 5 times.

D) Shoulders: sitting or standing, lengthen your spine into neutral posture, lean forward at the hips, bend elbows to 90 degrees and pull shoulder blades back while squeezing elbows back, opening the front of the shoulder, hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 - 5 on each side.

Tip: Keep your head/neck neutral when performing upper body movements.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

Lower body movements



A) Knee to chest – sitting or standing, lengthen your spine into neutral posture, pull one knee to your chest. Use support for balance if needed. Hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 – 5 times on each side.

B) Piriformis stretch - lengthen your spine into neutral posture, cross your ankle over the opposite knee, and bend forward at the hip maintaining good posture. Hold for 20 – 30 seconds, repeat 1- 3 times on each side.

C) Hamstring stretch – In sitting, move forward in your chair (do not let it slip out from underneath you), lengthen your spine into neutral posture, point your toes to the ceiling, and fold forward at the hip to stretch the back of the leg. Maintain a neutral spine posture. Hold for 20 – 30 seconds, repeat 1- 3 times on each side.

D) Hip flexor stretch - stand with your body upright (not leaning forward), step one leg back and push the front of the hip forward by tightening your buttock muscles . Hold for 20 – 30 seconds, repeat 1- 3 times on each side.

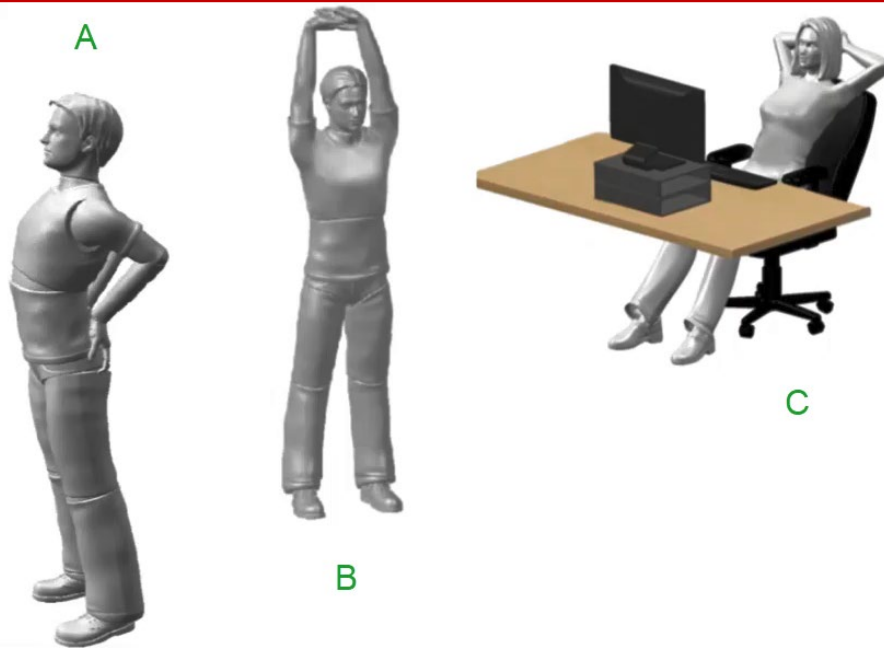


UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

Full Body Movements



EWI Works Diagrams <https://www.ewiworks.com/>

A) Back arch – Support the low back with your hands and arch your back while tightening your buttock muscles. Maintain a neutral head/neck posture. Hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 – 5 times.

B) Overhead reach – interlock fingers and reach overhead. Maintain a neutral head/neck posture. Hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 – 5 times.

C) Executive stretch - Maintain a neutral head/neck posture, interlock fingers, put hands behind head, push elbows back (do not push your head forward), and stretch legs out. Hold for a few seconds, repeat 3 – 5 times.

Use slow controlled movements.



Postural Exercise: Wall Angels



Starting position

Stand with your head, upper back and buttocks against a wall. Heels are ~ 6 inches away from the wall. Place your hand between the wall and the small of your back; adjust your position so your hand fits comfortably. Remove your hand.

If you cannot maintain the position, stop the exercise.

Movement

Point thumbs up, with elbows bent to 90 degrees raise thumbs to touch the wall. You must maintain your starting posture. If your head moves away from the wall or your low back/pelvis moves, stop the exercise.

Complete 1- 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

If you have grinding, clicking, numbness, tingling or pain, stop the exercise.

If you are able to maintain your starting position and the exercise is comfortable, try the progression.

Progression

Bring arms out to the side while continuing to maintain your starting posture. If your head moves away from the wall or your low back/pelvis moves, stop the exercise.

Slide hands and elbows up the wall and back down.

Complete 1-3 sets of 10 repetitions

If you experience pain or discomfort with this exercise, discontinue and discuss your concerns with your health care provider for further guidance.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

Functional Activities at Home and Everyday

Following are some movement break activity suggestions for home. Examples listed include functional activities and exercise progressions. Consider your health and fitness level to determine the level of intensity and activity type. Remember to check with your Health Care Provider if you have an injury or illness affecting your physical abilities, prior to engaging in new physical activities.

1) Walk with purpose

Use proper posture, take long strides, and feel your muscles working for you.

Start a walking program and gradually increase the time and/or distance. Use your phone or a pedometer to track your progress.



2) Horizontal to Vertical (Home)

a) Start on the floor, couch, or bed, use your hands and furniture to help yourself stand up.

b) Stand up without using your hands.

c) Increase the repetitions.





3) Balance progressions

- a) Stand on one leg (goal is 30 seconds each leg).
- b) Stand on one leg, perform arm movements.
- c) Stand on one leg, perform leg movements.
- d) Stand on one leg and close your eyes.
- e) Hop on one leg, stop, and keep your balance.



4) Posture Checks - Stand and sit tall

Correct your posture when in static positions. Feel your muscles working to hold you upright using good posture.



5) Controlled sitting

Do not flop into your chair, control your movement to sit down. Practice and concentrate on sitting down properly.

- a) Place a pillow on your chair. Use the armrests to lower into the chair and to stand up.
- b) Remove the pillow and use the armrests.
- c) Do not use the armrests and maintain control of your movement.





UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

6) Squats and lunges

a) Squats and lunges help improve trunk and lower extremity function for daily activities.

Squat: Keep spine neutral, feet shoulder width or wider, and squat as though you are sitting down. Use your buttock muscles to control the movement. Repeat 10 times.

Lunge: Step one foot forward and lower body down over the back knee. Keep knees aligned and feet forward. Switch legs and repeat 10 times on each leg.

b) Increase repetitions.



Squat



Lunge

7) Controlled stair climbing

Control your movements when you go up and down stairs. Do not rely on your joints to stop the movement. Start concentrating on your movements a few stairs at a time and then progress to additional stairs. Muscular control helps protect your joints; with practice you will eventually use muscular control automatically.





8) Toothbrushing posture (Home)

Keep your spine neutral and bend at your hips and knees when completing household tasks. Train your brain and body to use correct posture when brushing your teeth, washing dishes, folding laundry, gardening, cleaning etc.



9) Planks - horizontal posture (Home)

Keep spine neutral, including maintaining a neck neutral posture. Do not round your shoulders and upper back or let your low back sway; keep your body and head parallel to the floor. Stay strong, once you start to lose form, take a rest prior to your next set.

- a) Start on knees and elbows
- b) Progress to toes
- c) Try a side plank



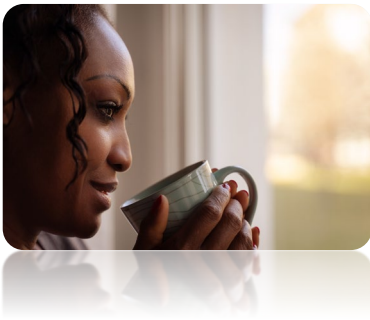


UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

PROACTIVE ERGONOMICS

MOVEMENT BREAK EXERCISES
OFFICE

Vision and Mental Health Breaks



Incorporate vision and mental health breaks into your movement breaks (20 seconds to 2 minutes).

- Look out the window:
 - Smell and sip your coffee
 - During a phone meeting
- Have phone meetings instead of virtual meetings to avoid virtual fatigue:
 - Safely walk during your phone meeting
- Change brain activities:
 - Change from a high focus, calculation activity to a creative activity
- Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away, for 20 seconds
- Eye exercises
 - Look up, down and side to side
 - Cup your eyes
 - Forcefully blink
- Use your senses (smell a candle, pet your cat, taste your tea, listen to music)
- Use humor and gratitude (find a funny gif., think of three things you are thankful for today)
- Take a quick socialization break (send a Teams gif., ask a co-worker how their day is)
- Purposeful breathing (box breathing, belly breathing)

[WellBeing and WorkLife workshops](#)