Basic recommendations from the American College of Sports Medicine suggest that adults engage in flexibility exercises at least two to three days a week to help improve range of motion, performance, and activities of daily living. Here are some stretches that can help you follow this recommendation while at work. Stretching can help reduce pain and stiffness caused by sitting at a desk for long periods of time. Print this worksheet and keep a copy in your drawer, or bookmark this website and add to your favorites for ease of return. These stretches can be done regularly throughout the day about every 30 minutes. In addition it is helpful to take time to get up and walk around regularly.

* For more questions or information about stretching and other fitness related components feel free to contact us at health.plus@vanderbilt.edu

1. **Sitting Stretch for Upper Body:** Sit upright in your chair and straighten your arms out in front of you with you fingers laced. You should feel this stretch in your arms and your upper back. Hold stretch for 20 seconds, do at least twice.

2. **Arms/Shoulders/Upper Back Stretch:** Interlace your fingers and raise your arms above your head with your palms facing up. To feel the stretch, try to push your arms up and back. You should feel this stretch in your arms, shoulders, and upper back. Hold for 15 seconds. Try to breathe deeply and do not hold your breath.

3. **Shoulder and Side Stretch:** Bend your right elbow placing your arm behind your head. Hold right elbow with your left hand. To stretch armpit/shoulder area, move back of head against right arm until mild stretch is felt. Hold for 10-15 seconds. Do both sides.

   - To extend stretch further down your side and into your hip, bend knees slightly and gently pull your elbow behind your head as you bend from your hips to the side. Hold for 10 seconds.
4. Shoulder Blade Pinch: Sit up straight in your chair and relax your shoulders. Place your hands behind head, interlace your fingers, and pull your shoulder blades together. Hold for 4-5 seconds. You should feel this stretch in your shoulders, upper back, and even a little in the pectoral (chest) muscles as your chest moves upwards when you work to squeeze your shoulder blades together. Repeat 3-4 times.

5. Shoulder Shrug: Start with shoulders relaxed and arms hanging to the side. Shrug shoulders up as high as possible without bending your elbows. You should feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Then, relax your shoulders back down. Repeat 2 - 3 times.

6. Neck Stretch: With hands behind your back, grab your left wrist with your right hand. Tilt your head to the side toward your right shoulder as your right hand pulls your left arm down and across. Hold for 10-15 seconds. Do both sides.
7. **Wrist Flexor Stretch:** Place your hands together in front of you with fingers up and elbows out. Then, push your hands together and down, keeping your palms together, until you feel a mild stretch in your wrist and forearms. Keep your elbows up and even. Hold for 5-8 seconds.

8. **Wrist Flexor Stretch:** Similar to previous stretch. Start with arms down in front of you and your palms together with fingers pointing down. Slowly bend elbows bringing your hands upward. Go until you feel a mild stretch in your wrists and fore-arms. Keep your elbows up and even. Hold for 5-8 seconds.

9. **Reaching Upper Body Stretch:** Reach in opposite directions with your arms while sitting. Hold for 10 seconds each side. Keep your jaw relaxed and breathe rhythmically. This stretches the sides of the upper body, shoulders, and arms.
10. **Lower Back and Side Hip Stretch**

In a sitting position cross your left leg over the outside of your right knee. Turn your shoulders to your left using your right hand to push against your left knee while your left hand pushes against the back of your chair. Exhale slowly and turn your head to look over your left shoulder. Hold for 10-15 seconds. Do both sides.

11. **Back Extension Stretch**

Sitting on the edge of your chair, place your palms on your lower back just above your hips, fingers pointed downward. Gently push your palms forward to create an extension in the lower back. This stretches the lower back and stretch can also be felt in the chest and shoulder area. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat twice. Use this stretch after sitting for an extended period of time. Do not hold your breath.

12. **Hand Shakes**

Shake your arms and hands at your side for 10-12 seconds. Keep your jaw relaxed and let your shoulders hang downward as you shake out tension.

**Referenced from:**
