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*Learn. Lead. Succeed.*

***The following are resources shared with Nichols College by our Worker's Compensation Insurance partners, FutureComp/USI, and are intended to be referenced in conjunction with our Remote Work Policy as guidance for a successful work from home experience.***

(Source: <http://adserver.workerscompensation.com/control/www/delivery/ck.php?bannerid=198>)

## Best Practices and Safety Tips for Working from Home

03/27/20 / Texas Mutual Blog (news\_author.php?author\_id=)

As many Texans suddenly find themselves working from home during the coronavirus outbreak, it is likely that most people don't have the same type of workstation in their homes as they do at the office. Texas Mutual is committed to helping you and your employees transition into work from home routines that keep your safety and wellness top of mind. Here are best practices and tips to help you make the most of your remote work situation.

### Best practices

Adjusting to working from home can be challenging and it may take some time to find a new routine and schedule. The following tips are recommended best practices to help you work productively while also maintaining work-life balance at home.

1. **Choose a dedicated workspace:** Designate a spot in your home for working. It should ideally be a space you don't relax in.
2. **Define a beginning and finishing time:** Pick a definitive start and end time each day to establish a clear work-life balance.
3. **Dress the part: Dress like you're going to the office;** it helps keep a sense of routine and keeps you focused.
4. **Have a plan:** Keep a more structured daily schedule than usual to help you avoid distractions and maintain productivity.
5. **Think about how you're communicating:** Be conscious of how you're communicating and the different communication methods you're using.
6. **Take clear breaks:** Remember to take breaks when you need to and use this time to get up, stretch and move around.

### Safety tips

Accidents can happen anywhere at any time, which is why we're sharing recommendations to help you maintain a safe environment while you're working remotely.

1. **Consider lighting and space when setting up your workstation:** Make sure you have enough lighting and space to work comfortably.
2. **Ensure walking paths and doorways are unobstructed:** This will help prevent slips, trips or falls and keep paths clear in case of an emergency.
3. **Don't place computers near heat sources:** Computers and other hardware can overheat which could lead to malfunction and could even start a fire.
4. **Maintain a clean and clutter-free workspace:** To minimize the spread of COVID-19, many counties and cities are implementing stay-at-home orders. While you are home and sharing space with your family members, be sure to sanitize your workstation and continue frequent handwashing. You should also keep your space free of trash and other hazards that could cause you to slip, trip or fall.
5. **Use power cord ties:** Cord ties can help you keep your cords organized, preventing trip and fire hazards.
6. **Utilize surge protectors:** Without a surge protector, a power surge can easily damage your computer, effecting your data or your system.
7. **Keep liquids away from electrical equipment:** This includes on the ground and on your desk. You can also keep a coaster on your desk and a lid on your cup to help prevent any spills.
8. **Prevent cybersecurity risks:** You can practice good computer security by utilizing a secured VPN and Wi-Fi, keeping up with company-approved computer updates and being vigilant of phishing scams.
9. **Stay hydrated and remember to give yourself a lunch break:** Keep these things in mind as working remotely affects your normal office routine.
10. **Locate and utilize the following safety tools in your home:**
  - **Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors:** It's likely that you will already have these in your home so be sure to check their batteries and test them regularly.
  - **First-aid kit:** Accidents can happen at any time so be sure you can quickly find first-aid essentials in your home.
  - **Fire extinguisher:** Familiarize yourself with the fire extinguisher in your home so that if a fire occurs you are prepared to react quickly.
- 11) **Prevent awkward postures and eye strain by making your workstation setup more ergonomic:**



### Windows

Where possible, place monitor at 90 degrees from windows to prevent glare.

### Breaks

Take visual break every 20-30 minutes.

### Task Light/Mobile Device

Frequently used items placed within arm's reach. Limit work time spent on mobile device. Use external equipment where possible.

### Headset

Use headset if telephone use is extensive and together with keyboarding.

### Monitor/Laptop Height

Adjust top of the screen to eye level or slightly below (2-3 inches).<sup>1</sup> Set laptop on a stand if needed.

### Head

Upright and over shoulders, not leaning towards screen.

### Monitor/Laptop Distance

Approximately arm's length away and slightly tilted.

### Shoulders

Relaxed and not hunched.

### Back

Upright/slightly inclined, sit fully back on chair.

### Hands and Wrists

Relaxed and straight with minimal bending. Avoid leaning on wrist rest while typing and mousing.

### Body

Aligned with monitor and keyboard.

### Backrest

Adjust height of lumbar support to support lower back.

### Elbows

Relaxed, closed to body, at about 90 degrees.

### Armrests

Adjustable armrests at elbow height and aligned with forearms.

### Document Holder

Place next to and at same height as monitor.<sup>2</sup>

### Keyboard and Mouse

Placed next to each other and at the same height. Lay flat on desk. Use keyboard tray as needed.<sup>3</sup>

### Feet

Fully supported, use adjustable footrest if needed.

### Seatpan

Adjust if possible. Keep 2-3 fingers' width distance between back of knee and seat.

### Chair Height

Adjust chair height until feet are flat on floor, thighs parallel to floor, and knees and hips at about 90 degrees.

### Chair Base

Five prongs for stability.

### Desk

Desk height at elbow height. Should be sufficient clearance under desk to sit without obstruction.

<sup>1</sup> Bifocal wearers may need to have screen set slightly lower.

<sup>2</sup> If using an inline document holder, place it directly below monitor and tilted towards you.

<sup>3</sup> If using a keyboard tray, it should be flat or tilted slightly away from you.

# 9 Ways Excessive and Improper Sitting Can Harm You

## Head

Sitting for long periods of time can cause blood clots, which can travel to the brain causing a stroke.

## Neck

Fluid retained in the legs during the day moves to the neck and contributes to sleep apnea. Neck muscles are stressed, leading to pain.

## Lungs

You are twice as likely to develop a pulmonary embolism or blood clot if you sit most of the day.

## Heart

People who live a sedentary lifestyle are up to twice as likely to develop diabetes and heart disease than those who move frequently.

## Arms

The reduction of physical activity leads to hypertension or high blood pressure.

## Back

Sitting for long periods of time places a high amount of pressure on the spine. Over time, sitting can result in compression of the spinal disks. Because muscles are tight from pressure, sudden movements can lead to injury.

## Stomach

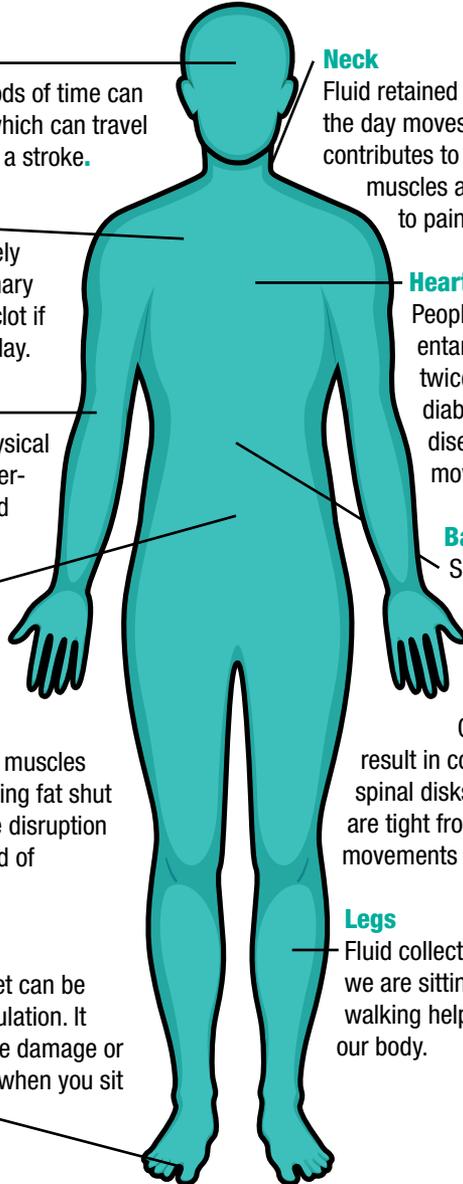
Excessive sitting contributes to obesity and colon cancer. Enzymes in the blood vessels of muscles responsible for burning fat shut down, leading to the disruption of the body's method of metabolizing fuels.

## Feet

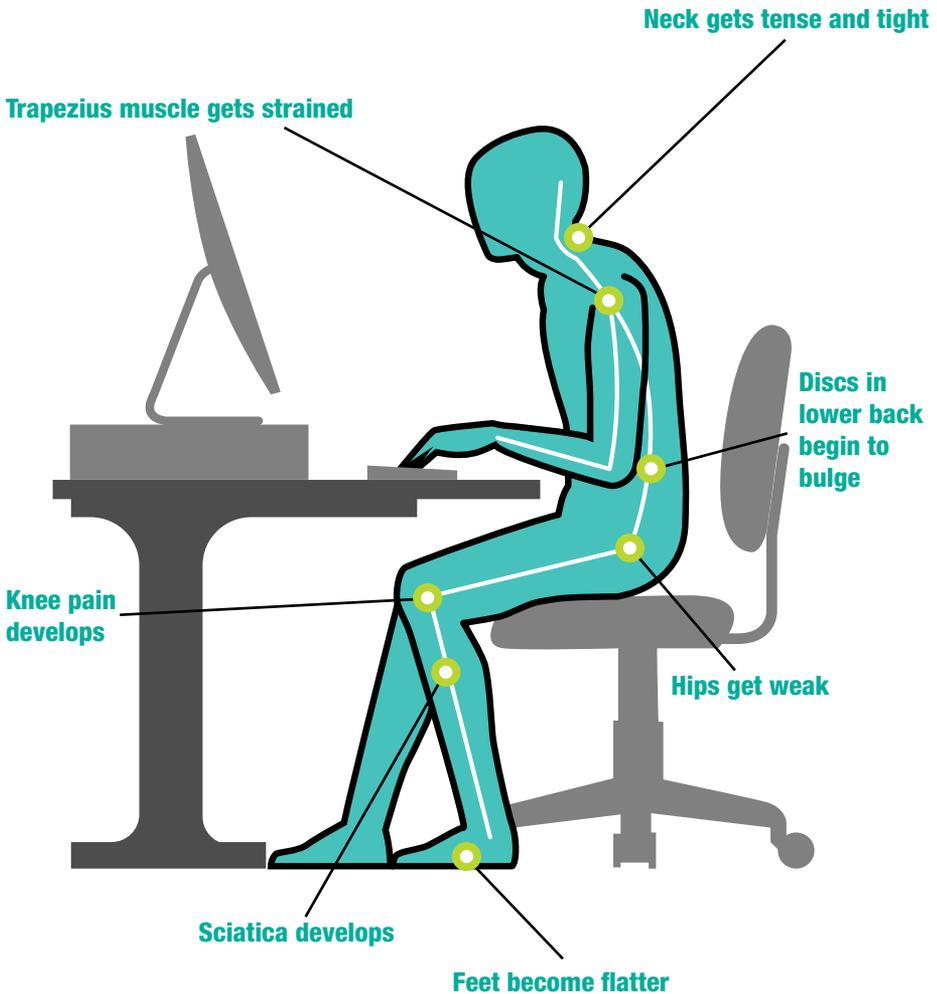
Numbness in the feet can be caused by poor circulation. It can also cause nerve damage or pressure on nerves when you sit for long periods.

## Legs

Fluid collects in the legs while we are sitting. Standing up and walking helps pump it through our body.



# How Excessive and Improper Sitting All Day Affects the Body



# DESKFIT EXERCISES

## Program Recommendations

\*Stretches and exercises may be completed any time during the day. They do not need to be completed all at once. If it is more convenient for you to spread the stretches or exercises throughout the day, that is effective for improving health.

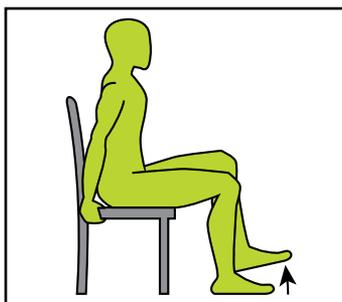
\*For a suggested program, aim to complete the exercises on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and the stretches on Tuesday and Thursday one week. Then, alternate to stretches on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and exercises on Tuesday and Thursday the following week—and repeat the cycle.

\*Take a break from prolonged sitting every 30 minutes.

\*A 5-10 minute break will recharge your mind and prevent chronic pain. Focus on short micro breaks of 1-2 minutes every 30-60 minutes to stand up and stretch your body.

\*Alternate sitting and standing throughout the day.

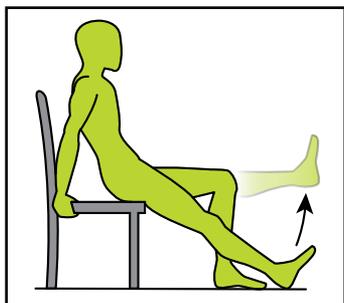
For further assistance with exercises and stretches, please contact the NASA Headquarters Fitness Center.



## SEATED MARCHES

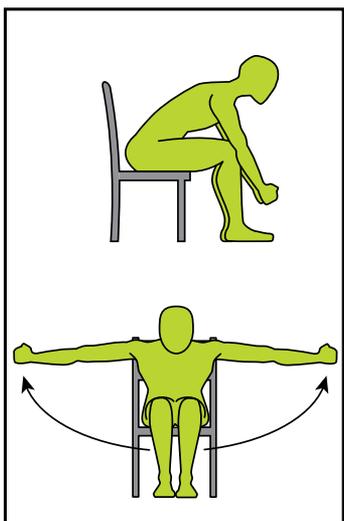
Sit on the chair with your back straight. Bend your legs at the knees and “run” on the spot with short, quick steps as fast as you can for 15–20 seconds.

# EXERCISES



## SEATED LEG EXTENSIONS

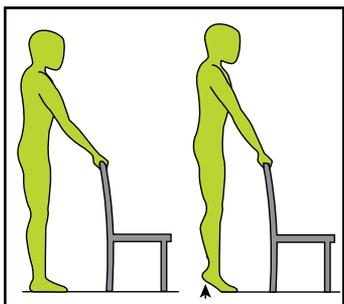
Sit on the edge of your chair with your arms by your sides. Extend your right leg out straight and flex your foot so that just the right heel is on the floor (keeping your foot flexed engages the muscles in the shin and ankle). Lift your leg up as high as you can without rounding your back. Hold for two counts, then lower. Repeat with the other leg. Perform 10 reps on each leg.



## SEATED REVERSE SHOULDER FLY

Sit on the edge of the chair and lean forward while keeping your lower back naturally arched. Your palms should be facing each other. Raise your arms straight out from your sides. Pause and then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise 15 times.

Prolonged sitting increases risk of spinal, shoulder, carpal tunnel, and leg disorders

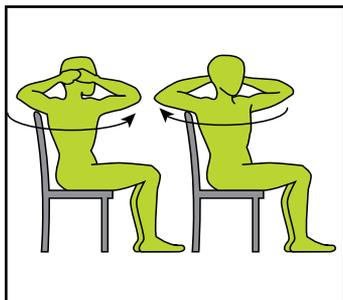


## STANDING CALF RAISES

Stand up behind your chair and hold on for support. Raise your heels off the floor until you are standing on your toes. Slowly lower yourself back to the floor.

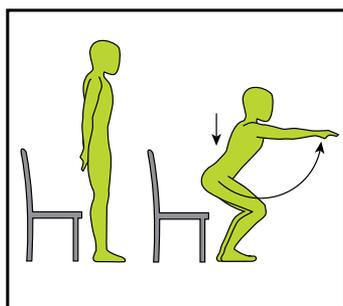
Perform 12–15 times.

# EXERCISES



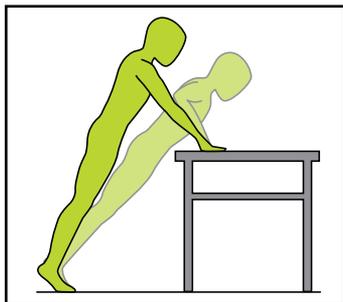
## SEATED TORSO TWISTS

Sit on the edge of the chair, bend your legs at the knees, and lean slightly back without rounding your spine. Bend your arms so your elbows are level with the bottom of your ribcage. Pull your navel in and twist slowly to the left. Inhale and twist to the right. Repeat the exercise dynamically 20 times total.



## CHAIR SIT AND STAND

Stand in front of the chair with your legs shoulder-width apart. Squat down like you are sitting on the chair but without actually touching it. Maintain a proper position: back straight, knees above the feet, weight on the heels. Straighten your legs to go back to the starting position. Repeat the movement 10–15 times.



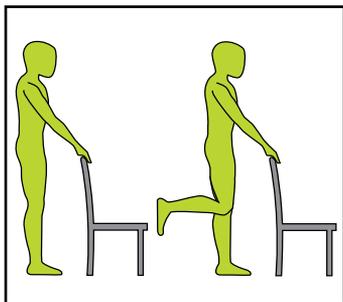
## DESK PUSH-UPS

While standing, position yourself a few feet from your desk. Keep your feet together. Then, put your palms on the edge of your desk, about a shoulder width away from each other. Lower down to the edge of the desk, and push back to the starting position. Perform 8–15 times. To modify, perform push-up against a wall or on the floor.

“Sitting for more than 3 hours per day increases risk for all-cause mortality deaths.”

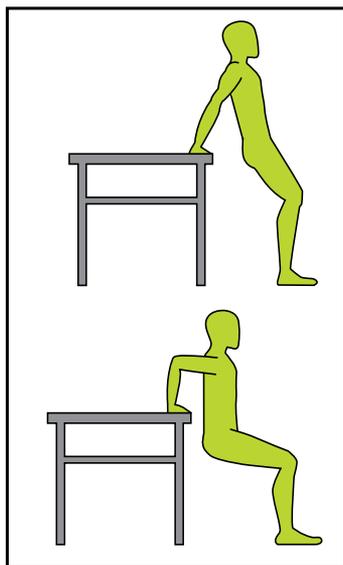
—Van Uffelen J.G. et al., 2010; Patel et al., 2010

# EXERCISES



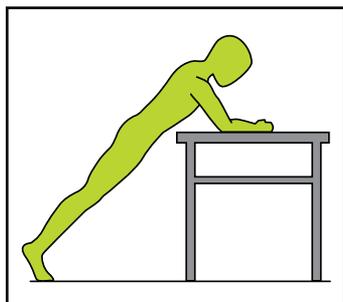
## STANDING LEG CURL

Stand behind your chair and hold onto it for support. Keep your body straight and firm. Start by raising one foot up to your backside and then lowering it down. Repeat the process for 10–15 times, and then switch to the other leg and repeat.



## DESK DIP

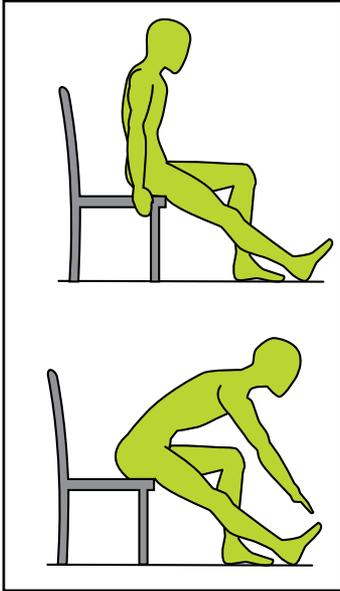
Put your hands to the edge of the desk, shoulder-width apart. Slide your bottom off the desk and hold yourself up with your arms straight. While keeping your back close to the desk, slowly bend at the elbows and go as low as you can. Return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise 10–15 times.



## DESK PLANK

Place your forearms on the desk, hands touching each other and relaxed. Extend your legs with your toes on the floor. Contract your abdominal muscles. Make sure that you maintain a straight line from your head to toes without lifting or sinking your hips. Hold the position for 10–15 seconds.

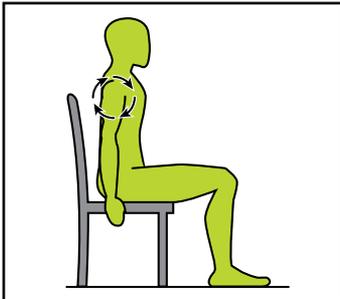
# STRETCHES



## SEATED HAMSTRING STRETCH

Sit in your chair with both feet on the ground, then extend one leg outward. Reach toward your toes.

Hold stretch for 10–15 seconds while taking deep breaths. Repeat on the other leg for two sets.



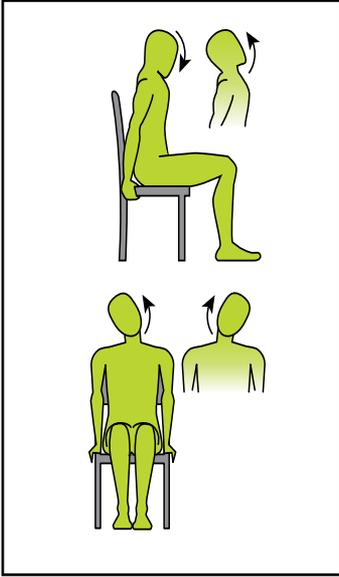
## SEATED SHOULDER ROLL

Raise both shoulders up toward your ears, then slowly roll them backward. Repeat, rolling forward. Sit tall and do not allow your upper back to round.

Complete this two times in both directions.

Sitting too much increases cholesterol and accelerates weight gain.

# STRETCHES



## SEATED NECK STRETCH

Sit tall on your chair, feet flat on the floor, without leaning into your chair back.

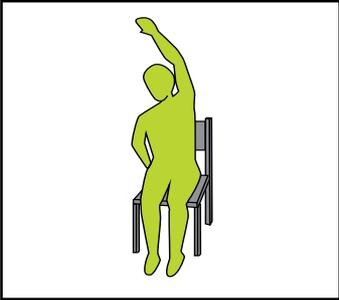
Relax your chin down toward your chest and hold.

Lift your chin up toward the ceiling and hold.

Bring your head forward and tilt your right ear toward your right shoulder and hold.

Bring your head up and tilt to the opposite (left) side and hold.

Breathe deeply throughout your stretches for 10–15 seconds for each.



## SEATED LEAN STRETCH

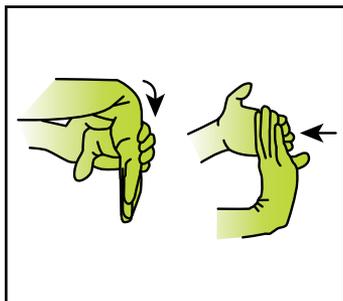
Sit up tall and raise your arm. Bend toward your left side reaching with your right hand overhead and hold for 10–15 seconds.

Repeat to other side for two sets.

“For people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking.”

—Martha Grogan, MD,  
a Mayo Clinic cardiologist in Wall Street Journal  
article on beating heart attacks

# STRETCHES

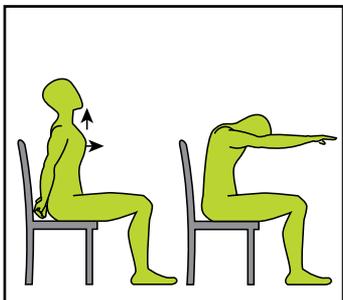


## WRIST/FOREARM STRETCH

Stretch your arm out in front of you. Slowly, point your fingers down until you feel a stretch. Use the other hand to gently pull the raised hand toward the body. Hold this position for 3–5 seconds.

Point your fingers toward the ceiling until you feel a stretch. Use the other hand to gently pull the raised hand toward the body. Hold this position for 3–5 seconds.

Repeat this stretch two times in each direction.



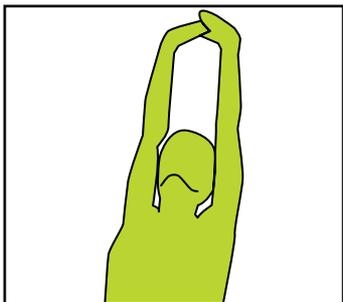
## SEATED CHEST AND BACK STRETCH

Clasp your hands behind your lower back. Push your chest outward, and raise your chin.

Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds with deep breaths. Perform two sets.

Hold your arms out straight in front of you, palms facing down. Lower your head in line with your arms, and round your upper back while looking down toward the floor.

Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds with deep breaths. Perform two sets.

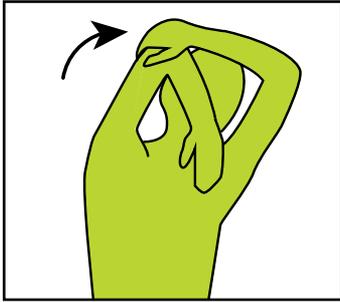


## SEATED CEILING REACH

Clasp your hands together above your head with your palms facing up toward the ceiling. Push your arms up, stretching upward.

Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds while taking deep breaths. Perform two sets.

# STRETCHES

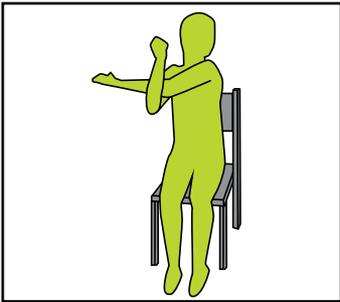


## SEATED TRICEP STRETCH

Raise one arm and bend it so that your hand reaches to touch the opposite shoulder blade. (It's okay if you can't reach it.)

Use your other hand and pull your elbow toward your head.

Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds while taking deep breaths. Repeat on the other side for two sets.

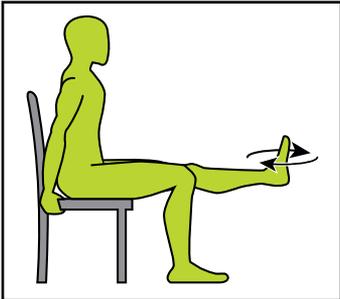


## SEATED SHOULDER PULL

Sit tall on your chair, feet flat on the floor, without leaning into your chair back. Engage the abs and bring your left arm across your chest, holding it below the elbow.

Keep the shoulders relaxed, down and away from your ears.

Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds with deep breaths. Repeat with the other arm for two sets.



## SEATED ANKLE ROLL

While seated, extend one leg until your foot is off the floor and slowly rotate your foot clockwise 10 times. With the same foot, repeat the exercise in a counterclockwise motion.

Switch to other the foot and repeat.

**Consult your physician before participating in any exercise program.**

**For more information, contact the  
NASA Headquarters Fitness Center  
at 202-358-0138 or  
<http://fitnesscenter.hq.nasa.gov/>**