

2-Minute Timeout

Our bodies aren't meant to sit still for long periods. Yet it's easy for hours to go by without getting up from your chair.

Whatever your job setting, 2-minute timeouts can help you feel your best throughout the day. Plan quick breaks to actively stretch and move your muscles.

Guidelines:

- Schedule at least 2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.
- Space them 1-2 hours apart. For many, 90-minute intervals work, while others need to stretch and move more often.
- What you do is less important than doing it. The idea is to disengage mentally from your work while fully engaging in something physical.
- Try different activities throughout the day. If possible, get away from your workstation, even if it's just a few yards.

Ideas:

- Get up and take a water break.
- Walk up and down the stairs.
- Deliver messages in person.
- Do 10 jumping jacks in the conference room or your office.
- Stand up and move around while on a call or webinar.
- Go and tell someone how much you appreciate their help.
- Step outside or look out a window.

Stretches for Relieving Tension

Arms Behind Back Stretch

1. Grasp your hands behind your back.
2. Pull your shoulder blades back and down.
3. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
4. Relax and repeat.



Chair Rotation Stretch

1. Wrap your feet around the chair legs.
2. Reach across your body and grab the back of the chair.
3. Pull gently to increase the stretch in the middle back.
4. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
5. Relax and repeat.



Side Neck Stretch

1. Face forward, with your head straight up.
2. Tilt your head to 1 side, gently pushing your ear toward your shoulder; hold for 20-30 seconds.
3. Lift your head into an upright position.
4. Relax and repeat on the other side.



Hamstring Stretch

1. While standing, extend 1 leg, placing the foot on a chair.
2. Slowly lean forward from the hips, keeping your weight on the standing leg, back straight, and head up.
3. Once you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh, hold that position for 20-30 seconds.
4. Repeat on the other side.



Arm and Shoulder Stretch

1. Lace your fingers together and turn your palms facing out.
2. Straighten your arms.
3. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
4. Relax and repeat.



Standing Quadricep Stretch

1. Stand straight, contracting your ab muscles (do *not* arch your back).
2. Reach back with your right hand and gently hold your right ankle (your knee should be pointing toward the floor). Keep your torso lifted, with your head up.
3. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
4. Repeat using the left hand and left leg.



Strengthening Exercises

Lunge

1. Stand with both feet together.
2. While maintaining a tall posture, take a giant step forward, bending the forward knee — keep it directly above your foot or just slightly forward.
3. Repeat using the left hand and left leg.



Calf Raises

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and toes pointing forward.
2. Keep your knees straight and raise your heels off the floor.
3. Lift as high as you can and then return slowly to the starting position.



Breathing Exercises

Proper Technique

1. Sit up straight with palms on your knees. Keeping shoulders down, back, and relaxed, inhale slowly through the nose as you expand the chest and abs; exhale slowly through the mouth, relaxing the chest and abs.
2. Keep your mind clear... focus on the experience of breathing and how it feels...
3. Feel the energy flow and imagine inhaling calm and exhaling tension and stress with each breath.

Guided Imagery

1. Close your eyes and picture a place you enjoy. What do you see? Smell? Taste? Feel? Hear?
2. Relax and experience the sensations of being in that place.
3. Open your eyes and become aware of the walls, ceiling, and noises inside and outside the room.