

Stretch at Your Desk - Brügger's Exercise

After an injury or surgery, an exercise conditioning & stretching program will help prevent future injury & allow you return to daily activities, sports or work. Talk to your doctor or therapist about which exercises will best help you meet your rehabilitation goals. Regular activity has also been show to drastically improve mood, decrease healing times & slow the aging process!

Warm-up before doing the following exercises with 5 to 10 minutes of low impact activity, like walking or stationary biking.

Ask questions if you are not sure how to perform an exercise, or how often to do it, contact your doctor, therapist or trainer.



1. Patient performs exercises once or twice for every 20-30 minutes of prolonged sitting; position is held for ~30-60 seconds
2. While sitting at the chair the patient pushes away from their desk and,
 - Sits at the edge of their chair with their feet slightly farther apart than their hips & turns their feet out slightly
 - Tuck chin in slightly (as if nodding "yes") & breathe through the abdomen
 - Slowly exhale actively by blowing the breath out through their lips while rotating their arms laterally, & spread fingers
 - Lift sternum slightly & pull shoulders back
 - This movement can also include the lower body prior to sitting by having the patient contracting gluteal muscles together & stabilizing core muscle as they move into a seated position
 - Some clinicians describe it as if there are strings pulling the patient's neck up, shoulders back & sternum forward

Upper & Lower Cross Syndromes

- Many conditions of the desk-bound worker are secondary to poor posture (headaches, rotator cuff syndromes, carpal tunnel syndrome)
- Common faults observed in standard sitting posture
 - Upper back rounded forward, shoulders become shrugged
 - Head pushes forward & chin pokes (extension of cervical spine)
 - Chest breathing predominates over belly breathing
- These postural faults result in standard muscle patterns of tightness & weakness referred to as **upper & lower cross syndromes**
- Brügger's exercise routine is devised to activate muscles weakened & simultaneously stretch those tightened by a prolonged sitting posture

Tight
Upper trap.
Levator scap.

Weak
Rhomboids
Serratus ant.

Tight
Erector spinae

Weak
Gluteus maxi-
mus



Weak
Deep neck
flexors

Tight
Pectoralis major

Weak
Abdominal
muscles

Tight
Iliopsoas

Prescription (your doctor or therapist will circle desired exercises above and give appropriate directions on how to perform)

_____ reps, _____ sets, _____ seconds to hold, _____ times/day or week