

Yoga in the workplace

Pose 1. Alternative to downward facing dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

Place hands on desk shoulder-width apart then walk back until your back is straight and hips in line with ankles. Allow shoulders to move away from your ears.

Legs perpendicular to floor; feet hip-width apart. Toes slightly in/heels slightly out so that outer edges of feet are at least parallel to each other. Neck is a continuation of the spine. Allow it to stay in neutral and head in line with arms.



Stretches the back, legs and arms.

Cautions: pre-existing shoulder issues. Very tight hamstrings (bend knees slightly if so). If too flexible, don't overextend the back of the knee (slightly release the stretch and contract quads). Slowly go to where you can reach comfortably and as you breathe out allow the pose to settle. With practise you will be able to stretch further

Pose 2. Arm stretch (Parvatasana)

Sitting on chair with knees together and feet together on floor, interlace your fingers, rotate the palms out and stretch arms up on an in-breath. Ensure shoulders are coming away from ears and shoulder blades sliding down the back towards you waist. Palms towards the ceiling. Also stretches the back.

Cautions: Previous shoulder injury. Like with all poses muscular discomfort because you have not used that muscle for a while is acceptable; pain is not acceptable. Listen to your body, go where you can and then ease into the pose with the breath.



Pose 3. Simple twist on chair (Bhāradvājāsana)

Sitting sideways on chair with knees together and feet together on floor. Lifting the ribcage creating a space between last ribs and pelvis but ensuring shoulders moving away from ears. Place your hands on the backrest of the chair, breathe in and as you breathe out twist from the waist towards the back of the chair. Turn head to look over shoulder. Continue with breathing to allow the pose to settle.



Repeat to the other side.

Cautions:

- 1) For those with hip replacements – make sure you DON'T twist into the femur head. You can avoid this if you keep your knees absolutely stuck together, allowing the twist to come purely from the waist. If in doubt consult your Physiotherapist.
- 2) For everyone, preferably do POSE 1+/-2 first; following the principle of stretching before twisting.

Pose 4. Adapted triangle (Trikoṇāsana)

Widespread legs, right foot turned 90° out and left foot turned 30° in. Arms lifted to shoulder level but shoulders still going away from ears. Breathing in and as you breathe out fold body at top of right leg. Once you reach the desk slide right hand along desk. Try keeping arms in straight line. Try keeping torso in line with legs. Right and left thighs should be rolling outwards. Let pose settle with the breath.

Tip: ensure your wrist and hand are in line with arm and that there is no strain on the wrist as this will reflect in your shoulder.

Caution: If you are very flexible ensure you are not overhanging into the back of your right knee by releasing the knee a little



Repeat to the Left

Pose 5. Forward bend/resting pose for heart (Uttānāsana)

Preparation: Stand with straight legs, feet hip-width apart or slightly wider; toes slightly inwards, heels slightly out so that the outer edges of feet are at least parallel to each other.

Fold body forward hinging at the hip, keeping the back straight, opening chest towards floor. Place fingertips on floor and look towards the floor. Keep shoulders away from ears and shoulder blades going towards the waist. Take long soft breaths in and out.



Tips: If you don't reach the floor, take your hands to your shins or slightly bend your knees. Ensure your hands are in line with the outer part of your shoulder.

Continue to full forward bend (Uttānāsana) by keeping back as straight as possible and folding arms, allowing the head to go down. Legs should be working but top part of body is relaxed.

Cautions: If you are very flexible do not hang into the back of your knees.

