

Neck and shoulder relaxation exercise

This exercise can help you recognise your own levels of muscle tension in your upper body and neck.

It can be done anywhere you can find a chair and only takes a couple of minutes. Try it at the computer or before you set off in the car. Before you start check that...

- You are sitting upright, feet flat on the floor, back supported.
- Your hands are resting comfortably on your lap.
- Your shoulders are not hunched.
- You can feel your head balanced comfortably at the top of your spine.
- Your jaw is not clenched (lips gently touching) or forehead furrowed.

While doing the exercise, don't forget to...

- Breathe easily, don't hold your breath...
- Move as much as you feel able/comfortable...
- STOP if you feel any discomfort, but...
- Be aware this may just be your muscles stretching/contracting...

Repeat every day and feel the difference!

- Breathe **OUT** for a count of four, **IN** for a count of two.
- Pull your shoulders down towards the floor, then let them go – do **not** control the release. **REPEAT** twice.
- Gently **SHRUG** your shoulders once or twice.
- **CIRCLE** your shoulders once backwards, once forwards. **REPEAT** once more.
- **PULL** your hands back at the wrist, stretch all your fingers as much as you can. **STOP** and let them **FLOP** onto your lap.
- **CLASP** your hands together in your lap. **ROLL** your chin towards your chest – only move a tiny amount! Then - **SCOOP** your arms forwards, until they are level with your shoulders. **BREATHE OUT** as you do this. Feel the stretch between your shoulders!
- Repeat this with your hands clasped so your palms face outwards.
- Check your posture and **RELAX** heavily into the chair, breathe out. Notice the difference.
- Take a moment to come back to the present after you carry out any relaxation exercise, and resume your next task slowly.