

A LITTLE BIT OF YOGA STRETCHES TO KEEP THINGS MOVING WHILE WORKING AT THE COMPUTER

By Danielle Gault

OK, not everyone gets to sit at their computer in New Zealand close to the ocean but sitting is sitting. So to counteract all that sitting at the computer which makes our mental function feel good about accomplishing cognitive stuff, we still have to take care of the poor old body – the physical function. Doing a few stretches can go a long way to keeping the body flexible, keeping the circulation moving, and keeping the mind from getting overtaxed with too much data.

Here are a few stretches to keep your body from stagnating while working at your computer. We will start with the head and work towards the feet. Take your time and follow your own rhythm. What I have here are simple guidelines but only do what is comfortable for you; if it does not feel right, do not do it.

1. **Head1:** Let's begin by coming to an exhalation and while exhaling, lower your chin toward the chest. Follow this with an inhalation while lifting the chin upward. Repeat this movement 3 times. Return the chin back to its normal position parallel with the floor.
2. **Head 2:** Next, exhale and turn your head slowly to the left. Inhale again and then exhale once again while turning your head slowly toward the right. Use the breath to create your movements and rhythms. Complete this movement 3 times.
3. **Shoulders:** Inhale and lift the shoulders up to the ear lobes. Hold the breath for a count of 5, exhale and drop the shoulders. Repeat 3 times.

4. **Arms 1:** Inhale and raise the right wrist upwards towards the ceiling – let it just float up and once it is as high as it wants to go, open the fingers and palms and reach up from the shoulder joint. Hold for a count of 5 and slowly lower the wrist back to the computer table. Repeat on the other side.



5. **Arms 2:** Exhale as you grab your left shoulder with your right hand. Next, with your left hand, press your right elbow into your chest. Hold to a count of 5 and inhale release. Repeat on the opposite side.

6. **Torso Twist:** Exhaling while you turn the upper half of your body towards the right to look behind you. You can create



more of a stretch by either placing your left hand on your right knee or placing the left hand over the right-hand top of your chair while twisting the torso to the right and looking over your right shoulder. Hold for 5 seconds. Inhale, release. Repeat on the opposite side.



7. Forward Bend Chest Press: Move away from your desk slightly to prevent banging your head on your desk which would reduce the benefit of stretching (sorry) and exhale as you bend your chest towards your knees bending forward while walking both of your hands down the front of our legs towards your feet or ankles. Hold the breath for 5 seconds. Then coming to an inhalation, keep your chin tucked in as you slowly

straighten one link of the spine at a time returning to normal sitting position. Repeat 2 more times.

8. Knee to Chest Press: Grab your right knee with both hands and pull it towards your chest. Hug it to your chest as you exhale. Hold for 5 seconds and then inhale, release by slowly letting the foot return to the floor. Repeat on the opposite side. Repeat 2 more times.



9. Feet 1: With your feet flat to the floor, point your toes towards the ceiling. Hold for 5 seconds and lower feet back to the floor. Lift heels off the floor keeping the toes on the floor; hold for 5 seconds and return the feet back flat to the floor. Repeat this toes/heels movement 10 times.

10. Feet 2: Lift one leg slightly off the floor while pointing your toes away from you. Now push the heels away from you. Hold each position 5 seconds and repeat for a total of 3 times. Then, circle the foot 3 times in one direction and 3 times in the opposite direction. Repeat the series of moves 3 times and then do the opposite leg.



Keeping things moving – whether it is stuff in the mental function or stuff in the physical function – is important. It is good to get things completed on the computer and feel good about cognitive results but remember to keep the old body moving too. Enjoy the series of movements. Cheers from down under, Mate. Danielle Gault is presenting a number of workshops at the 2012 New Zealand National Reflexology Conference and is also presenting some yoga workshops at The Life Centre in Nelson, New Zealand; both events take place at the top of the South Island which is something like paradise.