

STRESS-BUSTING STRETCHES



Small doses of stress help us rise to challenges by making us more alert, focused and energetic. But trying to balance our personal and professional lives sometimes throws things out of sync and causes negative symptoms such as aches, pains and stiffness. Research has shown that people in high-stress environments experience chronic shortening of neck and shoulder muscles from holding their bodies tensely. Free your body of stress with these easy stretches:

Neck release

1. Begin sitting tall with your back and neck straight.
2. Slowly tilt your head towards your left shoulder hold the stretch for 10 seconds.
3. Repeat on the right.

Shoulder rolls

1. Stand with your arms hanging limp at your sides.
2. Slowly trace large circles with your shoulders by rotating them forward and backward in a smooth motion.
3. Repeat each movement five times.

Reach for the sky

1. Begin by standing tall with your back and neck straight.
2. Reach overhead with palms facing together.
3. Breathe in as you slowly bend to the left hold the stretch for 10 seconds.
4. Return to centre and repeat on the right.

Lower body blast

1. Begin by standing tall with your back and neck straight.
2. If needed, hold onto the back of a chair for support while you slowly bend at the knees.
3. Repeat 10 times.

Open wide

1. Slowly open your mouth wide and stretch your jaw muscles.
2. Repeat five times.