

Coffee Break Yoga: How Yoga Can Be Done at the Office

by Jennifer Kaufman

One of the great things about yoga is how it can be implemented throughout our daily lives. Yoga doesn't only have to be done at a yoga class or to your favorite yoga DVD. Yoga can be done just about anywhere with a few modifications. And nowhere are the healing attributes of yoga needed than the high-stress world of the workplace.

But how can you do down-ward dog while wearing a suit or a pair of sling-back heels? Well, you can't. But restorative breathing and certain postures can be done at your desk while sitting in your chair.

Breathing is instrumental in yoga. Sit up straight and take a deep breath with your hands on your belly. Feel your abdomen expand as you inhale deeply. Then exhale slowly as you contract your belly. Make sure while you're doing the breathing your shoulders are relaxed, not lifted up or hunched. Inhale through your nose and exhale out of your mouth. Concentrate on this breathing throughout the yoga break.

Now do these few simple exercises. First roll your neck clockwise one complete rotation. Now do it counter-clockwise. Do this at least three times.

Put your arms and hands out to the side and make small circular rotations forward and then do them backwards three times each. Put arms down and roll your shoulders forward three times and backwards three times.

Sit up tall in your chair. Hold your arms overhead, stretching them as much as possible. Now interlock your fingers and have your palms face towards the ceiling. Keep your shoulder blades back. Now take your hands behind your back, interlock your fingers and stretch your shoulders back as you open your chest.


Now it's time for some waist twists. Keep your feet hip-width apart. Raise your right hand and gently lean towards the left side. Now switch arms and lean to the right side. Make sure your chest is facing forward, with your arm stretched over your head. Don't slump. Repeat this at least four times on each side.

To do a spinal twist, sit up straight and move at the waist as far as you can to the left. See if you can reach far enough to put your hands on the back of your chair. Now do this on right side. Try to do this at least four times on each side.

Now sit forward in your chair. Open your legs a bit wider than hip-width apart. Lean from you hips and move your torso towards the floor without rounding your back. Your arms and head can hang towards the floor. Keep breathing and come back up slowly.

Now get your hands ready to do some more tapping on the keyboard. Stand up and place your hands on your desk with your fingers facing towards you stretching your wrists and arms. This is a great exercise to keep your fingers loose and can even alleviate carpal tunnel syndrome.

By focusing on the breathing, relaxation, and stretching of these modified yoga postures you can make even the most stressful days of working for the man a lot more bearable. It will keep your body supple, your mind sharp, and your spirit lifted. So instead of getting another cup a coffee, take a yoga break instead.

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