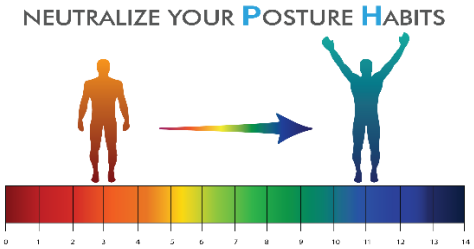
TAKE A BREAK!



Most workers can avoid prolonged sitting and be healthier just by getting up and moving for a few minutes every hour. In fact, some ergonomists say, "The best posture is the next posture." Staying in the same position and using the same muscles for hours at a time is not good for the back or neck.

Ways to take productive breaks:

- **Eye breaks**
  Looking at a computer screen for extended periods of time causes some changes in how the eyes work, including blinking less often and exposing more of the eye surface to air. Every 20 minutes, briefly look away from the computer screen for 20 seconds to a more distant scene, preferably something more than 20 feet away. This lets the muscles inside the eye relax. Also, blink the eyes rapidly for a few seconds. This refreshes the tear film and clears dust from the eye surface.

- **Micro-breaks**
  Micro-breaks are less than two minutes long, and perfect to do between sessions of typing. Most people type in bursts rather than continuously. Between these bursts of activity, rest the hands in a relaxed, flat, straight posture. Though micro-breaks are short, stretching, standing, moving, or a different working task (such as a phone call) can all be accomplished. A micro-break isn't necessarily a break from work, but it's a break from using a set of muscles (such as the finger flexors doing a lot of typing).

- **Rest breaks**
  Every hour take a brief rest break. During this break, stand up, move around, and do something else. Examples could include: getting a drink of water, talking to a coworker, and going to the printer or the bathroom. This allows rest and exercising of different muscles, to ultimately feel less tired.

- **Exercise breaks**
  There are many stretching and gentle exercises that can be done to help relieve muscle fatigue. These should be done every hour.

- **Ergonomic software**
  Working at a computer can be hypnotic and it can be easy to lose track of how much time you have spent at your desk. Ergonomic software is available to help monitor time spent using the computer. Alerts can be programmed for appropriate rest break intervals.