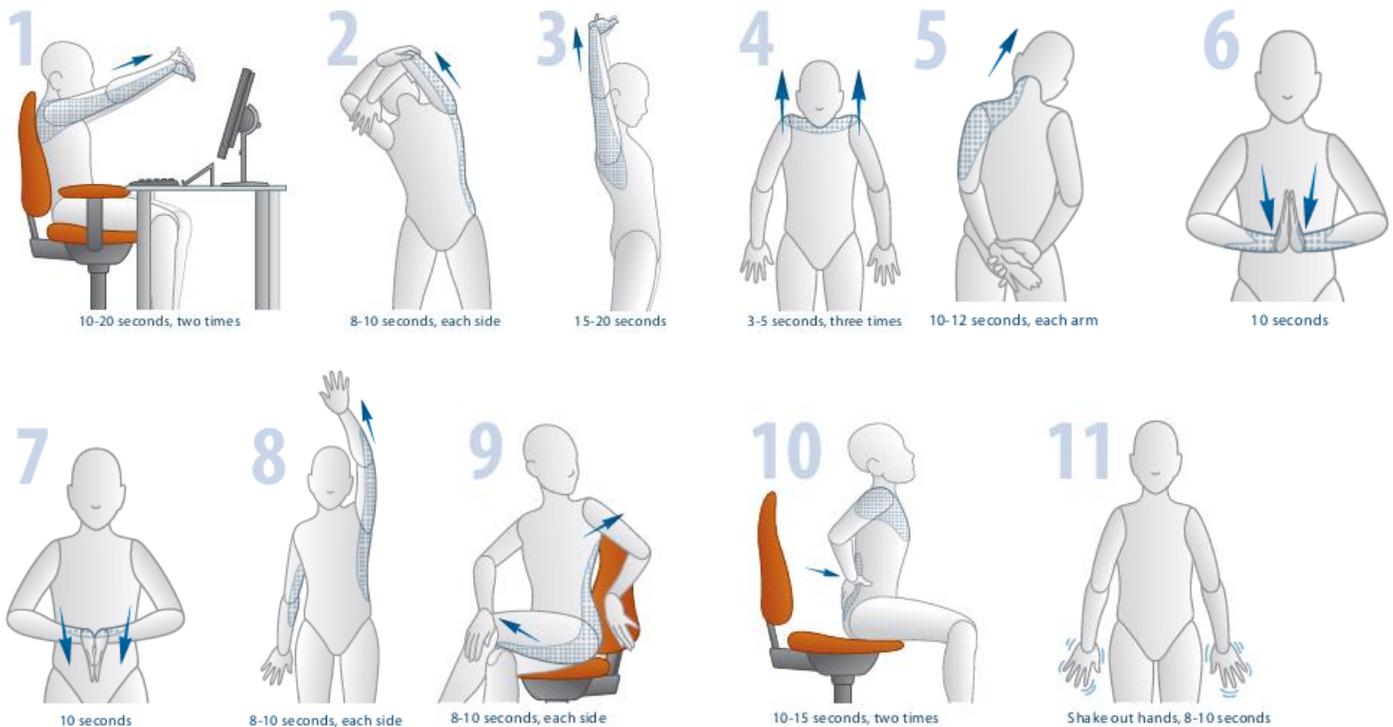


While neutral postures and proper workstation adjustment and set up are fundamental controls in minimizing risk to upper extremity musculoskeletal disorders, they alone cannot completely address the exposures created by the sedentary nature of office work. Sitting at a computer for prolonged periods, particularly in a non-neutral postures, increases static muscle exertions and often causes shoulder and neck stiffness and lower back pain and discomfort. A ***National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study found that adding short breaks throughout the day (four 5-minute breaks) in addition to a conventional two 15-minute break schedule, resulted in operators consistently reporting less eye soreness, visual blurring, and upper-body discomfort.*** Quantity (number of keystrokes) and quality (accuracy) of work was comparable.

Office personnel should be cognizant of how their body is feeling and modify behaviors to include the following actions:

- ✓ **Sit/Stand/Walk:** Organize and complete work to allow for a variety of body postures, including sitting, standing, and walking as much as possible.
- ✓ **Micro-breaks:** Take a 1-2 minute break every hour to relieve fatigue, improve blood flow, and reduce discomfort.
- ✓ **20-20-20 Rule:** Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Scan your eyes to the corners of the room and focus on distant objects.
- ✓ **Stretch:** Perform the following stretches every hour or so throughout the day, or whenever you feel discomfort or stiffness in the neck, shoulders, back or arms. These stretches require approximately 4 minutes to complete and should be done without pain or discomfort.



*Stretching illustrations courtesy of WorkSafe NB