BODY & ENERGY

Desk Yoga: 30 Breaks of 2 to 5 Minutes

Neck, shoulders, back, hips, wrists, eyes and breath: thirty short breaks to do at your desk, a working week planned, and what research shows about breaks at work



आसन

āsana

YOGIDE

Free sample

Contents

Before you begin 3

How to use this book 4

Chapter 1. Sitting all day: what we know 5

What the World Health Organization recommends 5

What short breaks do 5

What a stretching programme did in one trial 5

A yoga programme at work in India 5

What this means for you 6

For the personal use of the buyer; sharing or reselling is not allowed. This book informs and does not replace a qualified teacher or medical advice. Questions: administration@lacangel.fr

Before you begin

Most people who buy a yoga book spend more hours in a chair than on a mat. Eight hours at a desk, an hour in a car or a train, an evening on a sofa with a screen: the body that comes to the mat at night has been sitting all day. You cannot undo that with one class a week. You can, however, change the day itself, two minutes at a time.

This book gives you thirty short breaks, from two to five minutes, that you can do in office clothes, at your desk or standing beside it, without a mat and without anyone needing to notice. They come from the gentle movements of the yoga tradition (the joint series of the Indian ashrams, simple standing postures, soft gazing practices, the breath), adapted to a chair, a desk and a wall. And they are placed in a real day: on arrival, before a meeting, after lunch, in the long afternoon, before leaving.

This book does four things.

First, it tells you what research shows about short breaks and exercise at work, honestly: small but real effects on vigour and fatigue, real effects of a stretching programme on pain in one good trial, and what is not known.

Second, it gives thirty breaks, each with its time, its steps, what it is for and its precautions: the neck, the shoulders, the upper back, the lower back and hips, the wrists and hands, the legs, the eyes, and the breath.

Third, it puts them into a working week, with a plan for each day and short sequences for particular moments.

Fourth, it gives a little of the spirit of yoga to work itself: two verses of the Bhagavad Gītā on skill and measure in action, and a few habits that matter more than any posture.

> **About the translations.**
>
> The translations of the Sanskrit verses in this book were written for Yogide from the Sanskrit text. They are not copied or adapted from any modern published translation.

> **Health first.**
>
> These breaks are gentle, but they do not treat pain. If you have pain in the neck, back, shoulder, wrist or hand that is severe, that gets worse, that wakes you at night, or that comes with numbness, tingling or weakness in an arm or a leg, see a doctor or physiotherapist before doing these movements. Stop any movement that causes pain. Seek help at once if you feel chest pain, sudden breathlessness, a sudden severe headache, or weakness or numbness on one side. Emergency numbers: 911 (US, Canada), 999 or 112 (UK), 112 (EU, India), 000 (Australia). Chapter 10 gives the precautions in full; each break has its own.

How to use this book

Read Chapters 1 and 2 (twenty minutes). Then choose three breaks from Chapter 3 and try them tomorrow at work. Each week, add three new ones. Within a month you will know which ones your body asks for. The week plan of Chapter 8 is a structure; the sequences of Chapter 9 are for particular moments. If you have back pain, our book Yoga for Back Pain, by the Evidence goes much further than this one.

Chapter 1. Sitting all day: what we know

What the World Health Organization recommends

The World Health Organization's 2020 guidelines on physical activity, published by Fiona Bull and colleagues (British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2020), recommend that all adults do 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week, or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous activity, with muscle-strengthening activities as well. For the first time, they also recommend reducing sedentary behaviour for all ages and abilities, while noting that the evidence was not enough to set a precise threshold. Their message: some physical activity is better than none. (DOI 10.1136/bjsports-2020-102955, PMID 33239350.)

The breaks in this book are not a substitute for that weekly activity: two minutes of neck movements are not a brisk walk. They are a way to interrupt long periods of sitting, to keep the joints moving, and to rest the eyes and the mind.

What short breaks do

A meta-analysis by Patricia Albulescu and colleagues (PLoS One, 2022) gathered experimental and quasi-experimental studies of micro-breaks (short breaks of up to ten minutes) at work: 22 independent samples, 2,335 participants. Micro-breaks had a small but significant effect in increasing vigour and reducing fatigue. Their effect on overall performance was not significant; it appeared only for tasks with lower cognitive demands, and longer breaks helped performance more. The authors suggest that recovering from highly demanding tasks may need more than ten minutes. (DOI 10.1371/journal.pone.0272460, PMID 36044424.)

What a stretching programme did in one trial

In a randomised trial by Ardalan Shariat and colleagues (Brazilian Journal of Physical Therapy, 2018), 142 office workers aged 20 to 50 with neck, shoulder and lower back pain were assigned to a stretching exercise programme, to ergonomic changes to their workstation, to both, or to no intervention, for six months. Compared with no intervention, the stretching group and the combined group had lower pain scores for the neck, the shoulders and the lower back. The improvement between the fourth and sixth months was seen only in the exercise group. The authors conclude that stretching exercises should be part of treatment programmes rather than relying on ergonomic changes alone. (DOI 10.1016/j.bjpt.2017.09.003, PMID 28939263.)

A yoga programme at work in India

In a randomised trial in Bhopal by Kavita Fogawat and colleagues (Journal of Education and Health Promotion, 2024), 128 blue-collar workers were assigned to forty minutes of supervised yoga-based

loosening exercises a day, five days a week for one month, followed by a month of practice at home, or to a waiting list. Adherence was good, and the yoga group reported less fatigue, pain and burnout and better flexibility, strength and quality of life than the controls. The workers were manual workers, not office workers, and the programme was much longer than a two-minute break. (DOI 10.4103/jehp.jehp_541_23, PMID 38784274.)

What this means for you

What research suggests	What it does not show
Short breaks give a small boost to vigour and reduce fatigue	that they make you more productive on demanding tasks
A regular stretching programme reduced neck, shoulder and back pain in office workers in one good trial	that any single break cures pain
Workplace yoga programmes are feasible and well accepted	that two minutes a day is enough
Reducing sitting time is recommended for everyone	a precise number of minutes of sitting that is safe

The honest promise of this book: you will move more during the day, you may feel less stiff and less tired, and, if you practise regularly, you may have less pain. That is already a great deal.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already help your practice, and that they show how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, texts quoted with their source, nothing invented.

The full book has 26 pages.

Get it here: https://yogide.com/

One-time payment, instant PDF.