

Fitness Forum: Hip stretch counteracts excessive sitting

by Copley News Service

Many workers spend all day sitting at their desks. A simple stretching exercise can help work the kinks out.

THE MOVE: Hip flexor stretching with a chair.

WORKS ON: Stretching the muscles that lift your leg forward (hip flexor muscles). These muscles are at your front thigh and in front of your hip joint. These muscles get tight and shortened with prolonged sitting posture.

SET UP: Place left foot on a chair and right foot on the floor with both toes pointing straight ahead. Maintain good upright posture with both of your shoulder blades pulled back together throughout the exercise.

STEP 1: Keep your right knee straight and slowly bend your left knee while maintaining good upright posture. As you move in to the stretch position, contract your right buttocks muscle. This helps to relax the hip flexor muscles. Keep bending your left knee until good stretching is felt at the front of your right hip. Hold the position for two to three seconds and keep contracting the buttocks muscles during this time.

STEP 2: Relax your buttocks muscles and extend your left knee slowly to go back to the starting position.

REPETITION: Do 10 to 15 repetitions for two to three sets on each leg.

PRECAUTIONS: Do not overstretch. Stretching should not be painful. You should feel gentle tension on your muscle, not pain. Positioning of your pelvis is very important with this exercise. Maintain your pelvis at neutral position (not tilted forward or backward) throughout the exercise.