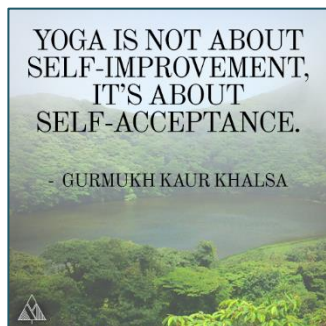




Yoga at Work: Stretching Towards Wellness

According to a six week study in the *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, where a test group underwent a sixty minute yoga class at work once a week. At the end of the study, the yoga group reported improvements in feelings of clear-mindedness, composure, elation, energy, and confidence. In addition, the yoga group reported increased life purpose and satisfaction, and feelings of greater self-confidence during stressful situations. These findings led to the conclusion that even a short program of yoga is effective for enhancing emotional wellbeing and ability to combat stress in the workplace.

While a yoga class can be effective, you may only have a small amount of time for wellness in your day. Yoga does not have to take up your lunch hour, in fact it can even be done at your desk! Try the five yoga poses listed to the right for a short and effective stretch and some deep breathing.



Yoga is a way of communicating with your body. It allows you to “check-in” and notice where you may be carrying stress or tension. Sitting at a computer can cause strain on the shoulders, hips, and

wrists. Even taking a few breaths and scanning the body for discomfort and relieving it through posture adjustment, stretching, or a quick walk about the office can boost your performance, mood, and wellbeing.



5 Yoga Poses At Your Desk



Cat & Cow (Spinal Stretch):

Place your hands on your knees and sit tall. Find a slight arch and exhale as you lower toward your thighs. Inhale, rolling the spine up to come back to a tall seat. Repeat breath cycle 5 -10 times.



Seated Twist:

Move forward to sit near the edge of your chair. Spread your knees slightly wider than your hips. Breathe in, growing tall, and place your left hand on your right knee. As you exhale, twist to the right, placing your right hand on the seat behind you. Keep your torso long as you look past your right shoulder. Hold for 3-5 breaths, and then return to center. Repeat on the other side.



Shoulder Stretch:

Reach your right arm above your head, and bend your elbow to bring your palm between your shoulder blades. Reach your left arm out to the side, palm facing behind you, and then draw the back of your hand up your back. Let the hands find each other, or hold onto a strap between your hands. Lengthen through the spine and relax your face and neck for 5-10 even breaths. Release slowly, and reverse sides.



Hip Stretch:

Place your right foot on the floor directly under your right knee. Place your left ankle over your right knee, and flex your foot. Inhale as you lengthen through your lower back, and exhale leaning forward slightly toward your legs. Continue to relax your shoulders and breathe deeply for 5-10 breaths. Repeat on the other side.



Three Part Breath:

Close your eyes or find a soft gaze. As you inhale, fill your body with breath beginning at your lower belly (1), then expanding through your ribs (2), and finally in your chest (3). Pause at the top of your inhale. Exhale slowly, emptying in reverse (3, 2, 1.) Pause at the bottom of your exhale. Repeat for 10 breaths.