

# Workfit

## *Introducing Deskercise*



## Training Session for UCOP

Presented by  
Workfit – a *FITWELL* program  
Department of Recreational Sports, UC Berkeley  
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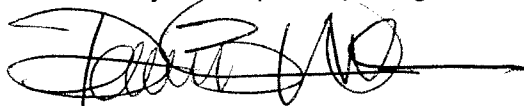
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Dear UCOP Employee,

Welcome to Workfit, a *FITWELL* program sponsored by UC Berkeley's Department of Recreational Sports. The Workfit mission is simple: teach employees how to incorporate ergonomic principles, safe physical activity, stress reduction techniques and healthy eating into their daily work routine. Our program is staffed by a team of trained professionals who educate, motivate and empower employees to make healthy lifestyle choices. Specific topics include ergonomic safety, fitness and exercise, nutrition and weight management, stress management, and general health education.

Workfit offers you an opportunity to learn how to better incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into your daily routine, leaving you refreshed, energized, and ready to tackle your day. But we think you'll find that the benefits of these workshops and programs extend well beyond the workplace. They will provide you with the information and tools you need to lead healthier, happier and more productive lives, both at work and at home.

Thank you for participating!



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# Deskercise

Feeling tired at work? Feeling stuck at your desk? When you sit all day tension builds; muscles become tight and joints stiffen. Regular movement eases tension, increases flexibility and gets your circulation going.



Deskercise—what is it? Deskercise is a simple yet comprehensive program with plenty of quick and easy exercises designed specifically for those of us sitting behind a desk for long periods of time. It offers simple motions, such as stretching your arms up above your head, moving your neck in circles, or rolling your shoulders to reduce muscle tension and stress and help maintain strength, flexibility and muscle tone. Let's move together with Deskercise!

*Note: As with any exercise routine, listen to your body. Move at a pace that is comfortable to you. Make sure that you are breathing continuously with each movement. It is normal to feel your muscles stretching and contracting as you move. However, if you feel any sharp pain, stop what you are doing. You might need to check the alignment notes to modify your position or skip to the next exercise.*

## Neck

Many people suffer from neck stiffness and soreness. It's no wonder; your neck has the difficult burden of carrying your head around all day without a break. Stress and anxiety can also lead to an aching neck. So make time to move your body toward greater relaxation.

### 1. Relax and Roll

This stretch series relieves tension in your neck and surrounding muscles.

1.1 Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, relax your shoulders and let your head release forward, chin to your chest. Inhale and lift your chin up towards the ceiling stretching the front of your neck. Return to starting position. Repeat 5 times.



1.1a



1.1b

1.2 Breathe in. Turn to look over your right shoulder as you exhale. Inhale moving your head back through center. Exhale as you turn to look over your left shoulder. Repeat 5 times, moving with your breath.



1.2a



1.2b

1.3 Lower your chin to your chest and slowly roll your head from side to side in a half circle. Pause. Complete the circle by rotating your head carefully around the back. Reverse directions. Always keep your shoulders relaxed.

## Shoulders

The shoulder joint is one of the most complex and frequently injured areas in the body. Your shoulders link the three most common sites of stress-related pain: your head, neck and back. Increasing mobility in your shoulders will help relax the back and neck. Practice these movements several times a day, or whenever your upper body is feeling tight.

### 2. Shoulder Shrugs



2a



2b

Sit tall in your chair and squeeze your shoulders to your ears. Then actively draw them back down. Engage your muscles; do not simply let them drop. Continue moving your shoulders; breathing in as you lift your shoulders, and breathing out as you lower them. Repeat 5 times or more.

### 3. Chair Press-ups

This exercise is not only a great way to balance your shoulder muscles, but it also builds strength in your triceps (the muscles in the back of your upper arms).

Sit upright in your chair, plant both feet evenly on the floor. Grab hold of your chair arms. Draw your arms in toward the sides of your waist; point elbows straight back.

Engage your belly and press your arms down lifting your hips up off the chair as you exhale. Keep your shoulders away from your ears and your elbows in close to your ribs as you slowly lower yourself back down. Repeat 5-10 times. Challenge yourself by adding one more repetition each day!



3a



3b

### 4. Thumbs up, Thumbs down

This movement improves shoulder rotation and stretches your biceps and triceps -- the muscles in your upper arms.

Stand up. Reach your arms out nice and wide parallel to the floor. Curl your fingers in and turn your thumbs up toward the ceiling. Then rotate your thumbs down toward the floor. Keep your arms outstretched in this "T" position as you continue to roll your thumbs up and down.



4a



4b

## 5. Do the Funky Chicken



5.1a



5.1b

5. 1 Begin sitting or standing. Place your fingertips on your shoulders elbows pointing out to the sides. Pull your elbows back as far as you can. Then push your elbows forward and try to touch them together. Repeat 10 times.

5.2 Now, keeping your fingertips on your shoulders, lift your elbows up toward your ears and then push them down to your sides, as if you were trying to fly. Repeat 10 times.



5.2a



5.2b

5.3 Move your elbows up and around your shoulders to form a complete circle. Repeat 5 times. Reverse.

## Back/Upper Body

Performing these exercises several times a day will help prevent that tight, uncomfortable feeling in the trunk of your body that comes from sitting all day.

## 6. An Apple a Day

This "apple picker" stretch relieves tension in your arms, sides and waist. It feels great when done slowly and smoothly, so take your time and don't rush it. Perform the stretch first thing in the morning and periodically throughout the day.

6.1 Stretch your arms up one at a time, as high as you can, as if reaching to pick an apple out of a tree. Repeat 10 times, alternating sides.

6.2 Cross your left arm over to the right side of your chair. Reach your right arm diagonally up and over head. Continue to reach up towards the corner of the room, press your right hand down into the chair to increase the stretch in your torso.



6.1a



6.1b



6.2a



6.2b

## 7. Let's do the Twist



7

Sit tall in a stationary chair with both feet flat on the floor. Look straight ahead. Slowly twist to your right as you grab hold of the arm rest on the right side of your chair with both hands. Turn to look over your right shoulder and hold for 15 seconds. Twist left and right with the goal of rotating the body a little farther each time. Repeat 4 to 6 times.

## 8. Tarzan Stretch

Interlace your fingers behind your back. Pressing your hands towards the floor, squeeze your shoulder blades together and open your chest. Then raise and lengthen your arms away from your hips. Fold forward for a deeper opening. Hold for five to ten seconds. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



8a



8b

## Chest & Arms

Even though they are a smaller muscle group, the arms can become strained or weakened through the repetition of daily office activities. Moving differently, regular stretch breaks and strength building exercises can help.

### 9. Heavy Hinges

Standing upright with your thumbs by your sides imagine that you are standing in a pool of water. Use this image to create resistance as you press both arms straight back simultaneously. Hold for five seconds. Bend your elbows (like a hinge), lifting your lower arms until they are parallel with the floor. Your fingers point straight ahead. Then press back to starting position. Repeat five to ten times.



9a



9b

### 10. Give Your Day a Push-off

These standing push-ups are easier than the military kind. Nevertheless, they build strength in the arms and shoulders and feel great after a long day of sitting. All you need is a wall to lean on, so stand up and push.

Stand facing a wall, with your feet hip distance apart, toes about 12 inches from the wall. Place your palms on the wall at shoulder height. Bend your elbows and lean forward as far as possible without touching your forearms to the wall. Keep your torso and legs lengthened in one long line. Push yourself back to starting position.



10a



10b

Note: The farther you are away from the wall, the more difficult the movement will be. Gradually increase your distance as you become stronger, but do not exceed two feet.



## Hands & Wrists

These simple exercises will help to increase the mobility of your hands and wrists and relieve tension created by hours of typing.

### 11. Reach Out and Move Your Digits

11.1 Starting with one hand at a time touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger in turn, making the circle as round as you can. Straighten your fingers in between each touch.



11.1a



11.1b



11.1c

11.2 Stretch your arms straight forward at shoulder height. Bend your wrists and lift your fingers up towards the ceiling. Hold. Hinge at the wrist lowering your fingers towards the floor. Hold and repeat several times.



11.2a



11.2b

11.3 With arms extended, circle your hands in towards one another. Pause, and reverse. Complete 10 rotations in each direction.

## Legs

When you sit throughout the day, your leg muscles can become tight if you don't stretch them periodically. Your toes may also become cold or numb from a lack of circulation.

## 12. Hamstring Hug



12a



12b

This is a good stretch for your lower body that you can do while sitting. Not only does it stretch your hamstrings, in the back of your thighs, but you will also feel it working your quadriceps in the fronts of your thighs.

Sit back and interlace your fingers under your right thigh. Pull knee toward chest then extend the leg straight in front of you as far as you can. Repeat 5 times with each leg.

## 13. Sit on Air

Stand with your back against a wall and feet hip width apart. Lower yourself into a seated position, keeping feet flat on the floor, and hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to standing and relax for 30 seconds. Repeat three times. Do not bend your knees beyond your toes. Keep your hips above your knees as you bend.



13

## 14. Balancing Act

This is a great stretch for the quadriceps. You may find it difficult at first, but it will become easier if you practice regularly.



14.1

14.1 Stand near a wall with your chair. Bend your knee and place the top of your foot on the chair. Feel free to rest your hands on the wall for balance.

14.2 Stand at the side of a chair with your left hand holding the chair for balance. With your right hand grab hold of the heel of your right shoe or your pant leg. Draw your heel closer to your hip.



14.2



14.3 To deepen the stretch, bend your knee further and hold your right foot or ankle with your right hand. Pull your foot toward your buttocks and hold for 10 to 15 seconds. Your knee should be pointing downward, not out to the side.

Repeat two to three times with each leg. To work on improving your balance, try removing your hand from the chair or the wall, little by little, as you hold the stretch.

14.3

## 15. Stretch the "Hams"

This exercise will get you out of your chair and help increase the flexibility in your hamstrings. Try this stretch twice a day if possible.

15.1 From a standing position, slide your right heel forward until that leg is straight. Point your toes toward the ceiling pressing your heel into the ground. Fold forward at the waist bending your back (left) knee. Place both hands on that thigh to support your weight. You should feel the stretch in the back of your front leg. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.



15.1

15.2 Now push your front toes down to the floor and hold for another 10 to 15 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

## Finale

### 16. Relaxing breath

16.1 Standing with legs wide apart, inhale and reach your arms up overhead. Stretch up towards the ceiling growing tall. Then exhale as you release circling your arms open and down to your sides. Repeat several times moving with your breath.



16.1



16.2

16.2 Now inhale and open your arms out wide at shoulder height. Exhale and drawing your arms in, give yourself a hug. Continue to open your arms and chest as you inhale, cross front, hug in as you exhale.

Take a moment to notice the sensations in your body. Thank yourself for taking time to move, strengthen and open your body.

