



Southwest Washington Workers'  
Compensation Trust

## Relieving Repetitive Strain

Tasks involving repetition like typing, collating, thumbing through pages, hole-punching, using a calculator, using a mouse, sitting in a chair, filing, etc. may cause discomfort if performed continuously uninterrupted.

Try to break-up the repetitive tasks with non-repetitive tasks or activities. Some examples are as follows: walking to talk to someone in the office as opposed to calling them, standing up while talking on the phone, cleaning/organizing your desk, walking to get a drink, going to the restroom, making copies, etc.

In addition to performing the above non-repetitive tasks, consider stretching your body, arms and hands to help relieve tension. Stretches should only be performed for 2-3 minutes approximately every hour. This may help relieve over-used tendons, ligaments and muscles.

Some of the more common stretching exercises that you can perform at your desk are listed below. In addition, don't forget that keeping yourself in good physical condition through a regular exercise program will keep you healthy both at home and at work.

- **General:** Stand up and stretch your arms over your head.
- **Eyes:** Rest your eyes by occasionally looking into the distance and/or closing them for a few seconds.
- **Neck:** Turn your head slowly to the left for 5 seconds and then to the right for 5 seconds. Repeat several times.
- **Shoulders:** Let your arms relax at your side and then raise your shoulders, rotating them up and back in a circular motion. Repeat several times.
- **Upper Back:** Make sure that your chair is stable. With feet flat on the floor, clasp your hands behind your head and slowly arch your back, bending your head backward. Hold up to 5 seconds.
- **Wrists:** With your hands held in front of you, gently rotate your wrists so that the fingertips form circles in the air. Repeat several times.
- **Fingers:** First clench both fists and hold for 5 seconds. Then spread your fingers as far as you can and hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat several times.

By breaking up repetitive tasks, you decrease your chances of sustaining a cumulative trauma injury.