



PAIN related to daily activities.

by Charles DeFrancesco, CPT

Our daily activities can actually cause muscle imbalances. No matter your line of work, you probably have some type of routine, repetitive activities. This can overwork some muscles and under-work others, and one reason many people often say, "I do not know how this happened. One day I felt pain, but I've never had an injury."

The body is a balanced system of levers and disrupting that balance can put joints at a mechanical disadvantage, causing unnatural and inefficient movements. The muscles that work harder tighten while the opposite weaker muscles lengthen causing impingement of joint spaces and other joint irregularities. This extra wear on the joints and ligaments can also cause arthritis, bulging disks and even tiny fractures in the spine.

For example, an office worker who sits incorrectly all day with chin forward, shoulders rounded and leaning over toward the computer will likely have anterior shoulder, low back and neck pain.

Think about the amount of times you get up and down in one day. If you are doing so incorrectly the force on your spine eventually will cause some type of break down. This postural distortion eventually can cause all sorts of problems such as pain, poor sleep, scar tissue build up and muscle atrophy, just to name a few. The problem is people go to the doctor and take medication for pain and are told to do routine, impersonal everyday exercises. Unfortunately, medication can often be a mask that only exaggerates the problem and introduces new side effects. And general, routine exercises don't fit every person.

People have different lifestyles and do different things. One person may have back pain due to a hip dysfunction. While another may have a thoracic issue, so exercises need to be tailored to the individual. An effective exercise prescription needs to not only consider your job, but your daily activities and workout routine.

Did you know stretching alone can alleviate most basic everyday complaints? Exercise and stretching related to daily activities can benefit any person, because if you feel better at work you will perform better. If a job is stressful it can actually cause tension in the neck and back, and pain from tight muscles can trigger stress, and thus the start of a cycle.

Here are 2 of my favorite stretches for back pain and stiff hips.

Warrior Stretch with Twist

Keep back straight. Lunge forward, twist and reach overhead. Keep a neutral spine.



Knee to Chest - Supine

Lying on back, knees bent with feet flat on the floor. Cross one ankle onto opposite knee. Bring the knee (that is under the ankle) straight up



towards the same side shoulder to feel a stretch in the buttocks.

Visit www.fitandfunctional.com for more pictures and free exercise programs.



about charles...

Charles DeFrancesco has been a certified trainer for over 10 years. He sits on the board of the education for The National Federation of professional Trainers, and is a co-author of their accredited study manual. He owns Fit and Functional which consults to many gyms, country clubs, local doctors and certifies personal trainers.