

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

IU Health & Wellness

Research and insights from Indiana University

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IU Health and Wellness for April discusses the following topics:

Workplace Qigong

Video capture by Hillary Demmon

Qigong movements can ease aches and pains from office work

Qigong: 5 moves to improve your workday. Office work can involve a great deal of mental exercise while often providing a daily assault on health and wellness efforts. Qigong and ergonomic experts at Indiana University say incorporating slow-moving yet brief qigong moves throughout the workday can ease some of the aches and pains and energy-zapping practices common to sedentary desk jobs. "Qigong and tai chi have been recognized in China as low cost and effective wellness activities, which is one reason they are so popular and have been promoted as healthful since the '30s," said Charles Pearce, a martial arts instructor and researcher in the Ergonomics Laboratory in the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Qigong movements promote improved posture and breathing, mindfulness and flexibility, and they can help combat fatigue brought on by staring too long at a computer screen. "You can take a deep breath, take a break and clear your mind. Just putting your arms above your head and stretching, you can feel energy going through your arms," said Chunyun Wang, a School of HPER qigong instructor who has taught the ancient Chinese exercise to employees in workplace wellness programs. The following moves can be performed without breaking a sweat and do not rely on special clothing or equipment.

To see a warm up and the five moves performed as one flowing sequence, view this video:

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6748.html>.



Below are brief descriptions and video links for each move:

- **Stretching the upper body:** Lifting the hands over the head during the workday is good for circulation. When performing it, imagine pushing the palms up toward the sky while the feet and legs push down. View here: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6756.html>.
- **Open and close the chest:** The twisting in this movement is good for strengthening, flexibility and reducing tension and pain around the shoulders and neck. Arms should be raised to shoulder height. View here: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6757.html>.
- **Look back to treat five strains and seven impairments:** This helps loosen up the muscles in the arms and neck. As one twists the arms, beginning with the fingers, and opens the chest and shoulders, it is important to not arch the back. View here: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6758.html>.
- **Forward bend:** This move, which involves self massage, is calming and can help loosen hamstrings that can become tight from sitting. The head should be kept looking up. View here: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6759.html>.
- **Crane posture:** This movement can improve balance as well as lower body strength. On the second round, lift arms and legs higher. View here: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/6760.html>.

Wang said the movements can be helpful if performed individually throughout the day or combined into a flowing sequence, which takes only a few minutes. She and Pearce said another simple move involves moving away from the computer, closing one's eyes and pushing the arms overhead while breathing deeply. This move can help with circulation. Looking away from the computer screen can help refresh eyes, which can become dry and fatigued without a break. They say incorporating any form of movement into the workday is helpful, such as moving the printer farther away so one must walk to it.

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