Movement and Breaks

Movement is important to relax muscles and increase blood flow to reduce fatigue and stress. Even if you have a supportive workstation set up it is important that you take breaks and move about throughout the day. Disengaging from computer/desk work for 5-10 minutes every hour improves focus and increases productivity.

Dining tables and couches are, in nature, less conducive to a supported working posture. For this reason it is more important than ever to be mindful of your movement and break schedule. If you have not been able to set up a completely supportive workstation at home take more frequent breaks: 5 minutes every 30-40 minutes to move around or stretch to promote circulation and prevent stiffness. Due to it's design limitations, working on a laptop only for long periods is a significant source of increased muscle tension in the entire upper body.

See the handout of computer/desk stretches . When it comes to stretching always follow these rules to get most benefit.

Perform stretching slowly and easily.
Do not do any movements that cause or increase pain.
Breathe deeply and easily while stretching to increase oxygenation of your blood.
If you have any condition that would possibly make doing any stretches not advisable discuss this with your health care provider.
Be consistent . Stretch regularly at intervals daily.

Some additional break ideas:

Set a timer to remind you to stop and move and stretch.
Practice 6 feet of social distancing and go for walks regularly!

Relaxing your eyes:

Use the 20/20/20 rule to regularly relax your eyes and prevent eye strain. Every 20 minutes or so stop looking at the computer screen and focus your eyes on something more than 20 feet away. If you can look out a window that works best but just look at something that is as far away from you as possible even if it is in the room you are in. Focus on that object for 20 seconds while breathing in a relaxed way.

Moving our bodies throughout the day is one of the most important and effective ways to reduce muscle tension from prolonged sitting, standing and computer work. Even the best chair, desk or other workstation equipment will not prevent damage to your body over time unless it is used along with a routine of regular moving and stretching.