

# 5 Exercises to Banish Computer Posture Discomfort

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## Shoulder Shrug (targets shoulder tension)

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Lift shoulders as high as you can (arms hanging down). They should reach almost as high as your earlobes. Contract your shoulder muscles as hard as you can – so hard they tremble. Keep lifting/trembling for 20 –30 seconds. Now lower the shoulders **slowly** – dropping them too quickly can trigger spasm.

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## Forward Bend vs. Neck Extension (targets neck tension)

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Perform a forward bend. Keeping knees straight, lace fingers together and extend arms over your back/head as far as possible. Now, **without changing your position**, lift your head back in opposition. (The tendency is to let arms down / back up as your head comes up.) Pit these two actions against each other in an isometric contraction for 20 seconds, then bend your knees, and return to standing (slowly).

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## Superman (targets longitudinal tension between your shoulder blades)

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(Caused by descending fibers of the trapezius being weak and **overstretched**). It combats scapulae curling forward and down. Lying face-down and resting forehead on the floor, place arms in front of head. Upper arms should be at a 45 degree angle, elbows bent and forearms pointing straight forward. Lift arms off the floor and hold them in this position until you can't anymore.

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## Iron Cross (targets tension across the top of the shoulder blades)

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(Named after the gymnastic feat performed on the rings.) Targets tension across the top of your shoulder blades caused by weak, overstretched mid-fibers of the trapezius. It prevents shoulders rounding and curling inward. Lying face-down and resting forehead on the floor, stretch arms out to the side, perpendicular to your body. Make a fist, turn your thumbs up toward the ceiling, and lift your arms off the floor. Hold until you can't any more.

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## Swan Dive (targets longitudinal tension along your thoracic spine)

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It prevents forward slumping of thoracic spine, forward head posture and medial rotation of shoulders. (This is the grand-daddy of them all, if you're only going to do one exercise, do this one!) Lying face-down, arms down at sides, lift head, neck and chest off floor, **squeeze** shoulder blades together while externally rotating arms by sticking thumbs out like a hitch-hiker. Hold until you can't anymore.

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## Restorative Yoga (this is your big reward)

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Using a bolster, yoga block or rolled up towel, position it horizontally directly inferior to the bottom edge of your shoulder blades – this is approximately half way down your thoracic spine. Resting in this position for up to 5 minutes lets the force of gravity work to undo excessive bowing forward by bending you backward!!

