**8 Stretches for Sonographers**

Work-related pain or musculoskeletal injuries are common for sonographers.  Affected areas can include the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hands and the upper and lower back. Disorders can range from temporary injury to having to give up work due to the development of a permanent disability.

Consider these statistics:

Between 63% and 91% of sonographers develop some sort of musculoskeletal disorder compared to between 13% and 22% of the overall population. More than 80% of “experienced sonographers” describe they feel pain while they perform ultrasounds.

A survey done in Australia found that 95.4% sonographers reported experiencing “musculoskeletal pain and discomfort.” About 9/10 of sonographers report they have neck, shoulder and/or back pain or issues which “prevent them from doing their job at the optimal level”

Ergonomics (such as the design and layout of ultrasound equipment and the exam room) and a healthy posture are two factors that can help prevent musculoskeletal injuries and disorders.

One recommendation to help reduce injuries is for sonographers to engage in regular stretching, several times of day.

Wrist Stretch

Hold your right arm straight out with your elbow facing down. Hold your right hand’s fingers with your left hand and pull them towards you for 15 seconds. Switch sides. This also stretches your forearms

Neck Tilt

While standing with straight posture, lean your neck to the right as if your ear is leaning towards your shoulder (don’t make them actually touch). Hold that for 15 seconds and then switch sides.

Ankle Grab

Sit straight on the edge of a chair. Bend over with head facing down and grab your ankles. Aim for your head to reach your knees. Breathe in and out deeply (breathe in for five counts and out for five counts).  Stay in this position for about six to eight breaths. This is a great stretch to promote deep breathing and to help relieve tightness in your neck and shoulders. (Source:

Upper Back Stretch

Extend your arms in front of you and turn your wrists so you can interlock your fingers. (When your fingers are interlocked, your palms should be facing out). Stretch your shoulders and arms outward and hold for 15 seconds. (Source: Cursaro et al., 2014).

Reach for the Sky

While standing or sitting straight, extend your arms so they are reaching up towards the ceiling on either side of your head. Your palms should be facing inwards, and as you are reaching your arms up, push your shoulders back. Wuebben describes it as “think of pinching a pencil between your shoulder blades.” Take some deep inhales and exhales while reaching as high as you can. This stretch is also great for breathing, the neck and shoulders.

Shoulder Rolls

Roll your shoulders backwards ten times while you’re standing with arms to your sides

Squat to Reach

Stand with knees slightly bent and feet flat to the floor. Bend down to touch your toes. Then wrap your hands around your ankles and bend into a squat. While remaining in a deep squat position, raise one arm and then the other towards the ceiling. Keeping your arms straight up, stand up. This is an example of a stretch which can help improve hip mobility; improving hip mobility helps eliminate back pain.

Kneeling Lunge

Kneel on one knee with its lower leg lying flat behind. Plant the other foot flat on the ground in front so its leg is folded at a 90 degree angle. Once you’re steady in this position, lean your hips and torso forward gently for a deeper stretch. For an even deeper stretch, raise your arms above your head. Switch sides. This stretch is also good for hip mobility.