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HEALING

Keeping Fit at the Computer

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We have been talking about the various stressful conditions caused by working for long hours at a computer. We have briefly talked about some remedies for this stress. Now I would like to mention a few exercises that can be performed while at the keyboard without taking significant time away from work. There will be great rewards, even if one does these just a few times a day.

For the eyes, we have already stressed the frequent change in focus from near to far. One may blink the eyes rapidly for 10 times and then relax the lids. This will help to lubricate the eyes and eliminate the tendency to stare. The blinking may alternate with frequent squeezing of the eyelids very tightly as one breathes deeply and slowly from the diaphragm. This is followed by a sudden release and opening of the eyelids as wide as possible, again holding this position through a couple deep breaths. This will tend to overcome the fatigue of the extraocular muscles. The changing of eye positions from vertical to horizontal, then from left to right, doing this slowly but going to the extreme position in each direction, is to be followed by a rolling of the eyes slowly in all the directions,

first clockwise then counter clockwise.

The neck should receive our attention next by also flexing and extending it and rotating in both directions as well as bending the head down to the shoulder on each side. Do not bring the shoulder up to the ear, but bring the ear down to the shoulder without twisting. These slow movements are then followed by a slow and relaxed rolling of the head in each of the directions, first to the right then to the left. Each movement is done slowly with concentration on the breath, which is also slow and deep. This will relieve a lot of the spasm and tightness in the neck and prevent headaches.

Now bring the awareness to the shoulders. Shrug them up as high as possible and down again, then rotate them forward and backward as far as possible. These movements are slow and determined and coordinated with the breath. They may be repeated several times. Follow this with a shaking of the arms and hands as though you are trying to flick water off the hands and fingers. Slow rotation of the wrists in both directions is followed by spreading the fingers as far apart as possible with tension so that the wide opened hand tends to vibrate. This is followed by strong closure of the fist. Again rotate the shoulders and shake the arms and hands. Repeat at least twice.

The spinal twist can also be done while seated before the keyboard. Sitting straight and on a deep inspiration, exhale slowly and turn the body at the waist to the left so that the right hand reaches behind you and grabs onto the chair to put more strength into the twist. While in the extreme position

take a deep breath and send a message of relaxation to the muscles of the back. Repeat this in reverse. At least two or three repetitions at a time are suggested.

While away from the computer, you might want to stand with both feet together and rise up on the tips of the toes, then back on the soles of the feet and then up on the heels. This will help to relieve tension in the extremities if it develops.

More exercises next month.

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