

# STRETCH FOR YOUR TECH HANDBOOK

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# TECHNOLOGY & YOUR BODY

Sometimes life can be hard on your body. When you are in school, you spend most of your days sitting. You may also spend time carrying around heavy books and bending over computers and homework.

The things that you enjoy the most can also be hard on your body — things like sports, martial arts and dancing. That's why it's important to pay attention to what your body is telling you.

**What does your body tell you when you use computers, phones, iPods, tablets and other devices for long periods of time?**

It's common to feel pain, soreness or discomfort in different areas of your body when you're using these devices a lot. This is usually due to weak posture.

**Strong posture isn't just sitting up straight.** Strong posture is about muscle strength, flexibility and how your body responds to the demands of gravity.

Luckily, there are many things that you can do to feel better and fight the effects of weak posture.



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# TIPS FOR TECHNOLOGY USE

- 1. Take breaks.** Every 20 or 30 minutes, put down your device and walk around, get a drink or stretch.
- 2. Get moving.** Make sure you exercise every day. Aim for one hour of activity. If you aren't involved in any sports or activities after school, try taking a walk, riding your bike or going for a swim.
- 3. Sit up straight.** When you spend a lot of time sitting, make sure that your back is straight, your chest is out and your shoulders are back.
- 4. Look up.** Instead of leaning your gaze down towards your tablet or phone, lift your head and bring your device up to eye level.
- 5. Don't let yourself hang.** If your arms are tired and you have to look down at your device, tuck your chin into your neck instead of hanging your head forward.
- 6. Stretch it out.** Practice the hand, shoulder and neck stretches on the following page whenever you feel pain or discomfort. Practice Straighten Up Alberta every day to strengthen your posture and help prevent aches and pains.



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# STRETCH FOR YOUR TECH

## Hands & Wrists

- Open hands, stretching your fingers far out and then close them, squeezing tight
- Play with putty/clay, clothespins, building blocks, construction toys, stacking cups or stress balls
- Set up tissue paper on a table, put your hands flat on the paper and scrunch them into balls (use regular paper or construction paper as your hands get stronger)
- Tap your thumb against each individual finger

## Neck, Shoulders & Chest

- Roll your shoulders backwards and forwards
- Lay your head and back against a wall and gently tuck your chin into your neck, trying to touch the back of your neck to the wall
- Standing with your back against a wall, raise your arms beside your head at a 90 degree angle – slowly slide your arms up the wall, then lower them back down
- Stand up straight with arms down at your side, and turn forearms outwards until thumbs are pointing at the wall behind, then pull your arms up gently
- The Straighten Up Alberta program has many stretches that target the neck, shoulders and chest – download the program at [www.straightenupalberta.com](http://www.straightenupalberta.com)



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# MAKE YOUR OWN STRESS BALL

## What you'll need:

Package of balloons  
Sand or cornstarch  
Sock (optional)

Toothpick  
Funnel  
Sharpie (optional)

### Instructions:

1. Stretch the balloon out by blowing it up and deflating it twice
2. Tuck the narrow end of the funnel into the entrance of the balloon
3. Slowly pour the sand or cornstarch into the balloon through the funnel, using a toothpick to unclog the funnel if necessary
4. Once the balloon is full, tie the balloon up.
5. Decorate your stress ball with your Sharpie (optional)
6. Stick your stress ball into a sock for added protection (optional)
7. Squeeze!



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