

# GET YOGA WITH IT

By Nadine Fawell – Yoga Instructor

Modern life is hard on our shoulders and upper backs: we spend a lot of time hunched forwards over computers, car steering wheels, and for the more virtuous among us, bicycle handlebars. This can lead to sore necks and shoulders and headaches. And don't get me started on the postural changes over time!

It's very useful to stretch your neck and shoulders every few hours to relieve tension & help prevent adaptive changes over time. Nobody wants to be permanently hunched, right?

Try all of these, or just some.



## GENTLE SEATED TWIST:

Sit on a chair with your feet comfortably on the floor, hip distance apart or a bit wider. Lean your left elbow on your left thigh, with your hand resting on your right thigh. Take a deep inhale and stretch your right arm up to the ceiling, then exhale & wrap it around behind your back. You might turn your head to the right as long as that felt comfortable. Stay here and take a few deep, even breaths, then come out and repeat on the other side. This is both a gentle forward bend and a gentle twist, and it's sometimes useful to stay a little longer on the side that feels more restricted.



## CHEST AND FOREARM STRETCH:

This stretch is SO useful if you use a computer a lot. It's a pretty uncomfortable stretch in the chest and forearms for most people and it's fine to bend your elbows in order to keep your shoulders relaxed and ease the stretch.



Sit or stand comfortably. Take a deep inhale, lift your arms out sideways, and as you exhale, roll your shoulders down your back and curl your fingers towards the ceiling.

Stay here for a few breaths, then release and shake your arms out a bit.

Well done, you're human again.

## COW-FACE ARMS:

I know, it's a ridiculous name. I have no idea why this arm stretch got this name, but it IS a very useful shoulder mobiliser.

Inhale and stretch your right arm up to the ceiling, and as you exhale, bend your elbow to bring your hand between your shoulder blades. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed away from your ears and your elbow pointing straight up.

Now, wrap your left arm around behind your back. You might just leave it resting at your lower back (good idea if you are stiff in the shoulders) or you might bind your hands. You can use a strap or handy jumper to make that easier.

Just be sure you aren't stretching to the point where you feel sensation or pain in your wrists, elbows, or shoulder joints.

When you are ready, repeat on the other side.



## NECK ROLLS:

So simple, so effective!

Start with your chin resting gently towards your chest and then roll your head side to side on your neck as pictured. If you find a particularly tight spot, you might want to stay there for a few deep, relaxed breaths and see if the sensation eases.

This relieves tension in the neck muscles which have to work so hard to hold our heads up when our shoulders are hunched forward.

Don't lift your chin up to the ceiling and crank your neck backwards though: that can be risky.



## ABOUT NADINE:

When she's not rolling her head around on her neck, you can find Nadine Fawell in offices all over Melbourne, teaching people to breathe, stretch and relax. Find out more at [yogainmelbourne.com](http://yogainmelbourne.com).