

Take a Break from Worries

Learn to distract yourself from worrisome situations by engaging in some type of wholesome activity. For example, read a book, solve a Sudoku puzzle or organize the garage.

—Vitality



Move the Outdoors In

Keeping something from nature in your work area will help improve your productivity and decrease your stress. Put a live plant, a small bowl of beach sand or a photograph from a hike you've taken on your desk.

—Vitality



TAKE YOUR WORKOUT INTO THE WATER

The next time you're at the beach or poolside, take a break from lounge-chair languishing and try a shallow-water workout instead. Walking through thigh-deep water burns nearly twice as many calories as walking on land.

—Health

A SPINE-SAVING SLOUCH

Turns out that sitting up straight is actually bad for your back. When Scottish researchers took MRI scans of 22 volunteers, they found that sitting at a 90-degree angle puts pressure on the lower back—enough to squeeze fluid from the disks that cushion vertebrae. "We saw dramatic changes after just 10 minutes of being in this position," says study author and radiologist Waseem Amir Bashir. The healthiest position, according to their research: Adjust the height of your chair so your hips are 3 to 4 inches higher than your knees. Recline slightly, with a small pillow behind your lower back, so your backbone is at a 135-degree angle to your thighs.

—Prevention



High-Priced Fashion

Big shoulder purses, one of the hottest fashion trends this season, can cause back, neck and shoulder pain, headaches, and possibly arthritis. Bags that weigh seven to 10 pounds or more can create strain along the neck and travel down that exit the neck and into the nerves of the shoulder. It's time to lighten up if your purse is at all uncomfortable when you put it on, if you can feel it pulling on your shoulder, or if it weighs more than just a few pounds.

—Baylor Family Medical Center at North Garland, Texas