Exercises to do at your desk

60-Second Aerobics

- Glance at the wall clock and rip off a minute's worth of jumping jacks. If you're a beginner, try the low-impact version (raise your right arm and tap your left toe to the side while keeping your right foot on the floor; alternate sides)
- Do a football-like drill of running in place for 60 seconds. Get those knees up! (Beginners, march in place.)
- Simulate jumping rope for a minute: Hop on alternate feet, or on both feet at once. An easier version is to simulate the arm motion of turning a rope, while alternately tapping the toes of each leg in front.
- While seated, pump both arms over your head for 30 seconds, then rapidly tap your feet on the floor, football-drill style, for 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.
- If you can step into a vacant office or conference room, shadow box for a minute or two. Or just walk around the room as fast as you can.
- Or do walk-lunges in your office or a vacant room.
- No conference room? Take to the stairs -- two at a time

Some strength-building suggestions:

- Do one-legged squats (hold onto a wall or table for support) while waiting for a web page to load, the copier to spit out your reports, or faxes to slither out.
- Stand with one leg straight and try to kick your buttocks with the other.
- Sitting in your chair, lift one leg off the seat, extend it out straight, hold for 2 seconds; then lower your foot (stop short of the floor) and hold for several seconds. Switch; do each leg 15 times.
- To work your chest and shoulders, place both hands on your chair arms and slowly lift your bottom off the chair. Lower yourself back down but stop short of the seat, hold for a few seconds. Do 15 times.
- To stretch your back and strengthen your biceps, place your hands on the desk and hang on. Slowly push your chair back until your head is between your arms and you're looking at the floor. Then slowly pull yourself back in. Again, 15 of these.
- Desk pushups can be a good strengthener. (First, make sure your desk is solid enough to support your weight.) Standing, put your hands on the desk. Walk backward, then do push-ups against the desk. Repeat 15 times.
Reach for the Sky
Stretching exercises are a natural for the desk-bound, to ease stress and keep your muscles from clenching up. Here are a few suggestions:

- Sitting tall in your chair, stretch both arms over your head and reach for the sky. After 10 seconds, extend the right hand higher, then the left.
- Let your head loll over so that your right ear nearly touches your right shoulder. Using your hand, press your head a little lower (gently, now). Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, and then repeat on the other side.
- Try this yoga posture to relieve tension: Sit facing forward, then turn your head to the left and your torso to the right, and hold a few seconds. Repeat 15 times, alternating sides.
- Sitting up straight, try to touch your shoulder blades together. Hold, and then relax.
- You get to put your feet up for this one! To ease the hamstrings and lower back, push your chair away from your desk and put your right heel up on the desk. Sit up straight, and bend forward just until you feel a gentle stretch in the back of your leg. Flex your foot for a few seconds, and then point it. Bend forward a little farther, flex your foot again, and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

Unobtrusive but Effective
If the boss wonders why your feet are on the desk, what about some invisible exercises?
Women can do kegels -- tightening and holding, then loosening, their pelvic floor muscles (the muscles that control the flow of urine when you go to the bathroom). This will prevent leakage and other problems down the line.

Butt clenches are also helpful in today's booty-conscious society. Tighten your buttocks, hold, hold, hold, and then relax. Repeat 15 times. The same goes for ab squeezes -- just tighten your tummy muscles instead.

Use Every Minute Actively
- Walk during your lunch break. If you find that boring, buy a camera and walk around taking pictures. Some experts say it's ideal to walk 10,000 steps a day -- this can be five miles, depending on the length of your stride. Forget emailing the guy three cubes over -- walk.