

## **THE CHAIR ISOMETRIC AND STRETCH FOR UPPER BODY TENSION RELEASE**

Formerly titled The Chair Stretch For Shoulders and Ribs, Revised from "Chair, Isometric Stretch" By Christy Friederich © 4/ 1992, Revised 6/6/2000. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

This chair isometric and stretch is a rebalancing exercise that uses the concept of “exaggerate what is” to help change the muscle tension in the spine, shoulders, ribs and neck so that the muscles of the upper body will relax and return to a more natural balance and position.

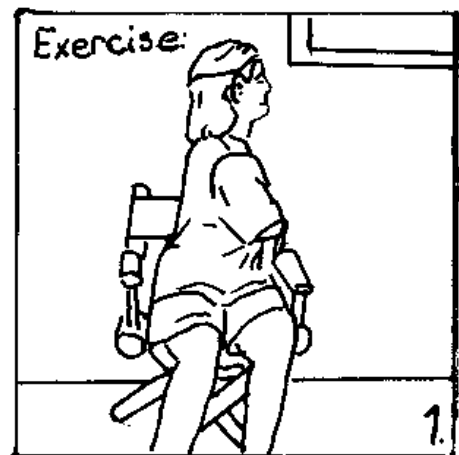
**BASIC POSITION:** Seated in an armchair would be best, but any straight back chair will work.

### **TRIAL MOVEMENTS:**

1. Cross your arms and clasp your elbows with your hands. Rotate your shoulders and your upper body to the left. Notice if the muscles of your torso and shoulders feel stiff.
2. Slowly turn to the right and then to the left. Was it easier to turn to the right or to the left? When you do the exercise movements, you will turn to the side that turned easily.

### **EXERCISE MOVEMENTS:**

1. Position yourself in a chair firmly seated in the front third of the chair. Lift your arms to chest height and begin to slowly take a deep breath as you turn your upper body and head to the left. Do not allow your hips to shift as you turn.
2. Continue the in-breath and, simultaneously, raise both your arms. Do the following movements:
  - a. You are going to raise up your LEFT arm over the back of the chair as you turn your torso to the left and then, grasp the top or lower back of chair with the left hand.
  - b. Move your RIGHT HAND across the front of



your torso toward the LEFT side so you can grasp the middle portion of the left arm of the chair.

3. Turn your head to the left and look over your shoulder as you complete the in-breath in a way that expands and stretches the muscles between the ribs.

4. Hold your breath, grasp the arms of the chair firmly and pull yourself strongly, but with sensitivity, to the left with both hands. Hold that position a few seconds. Move your eyes to look over your left shoulder as pull yourself strongly to the left with both arms and hands. Be responsive to the tension in the muscles; do not force!

When you pull strongly you will feel a stretching in shoulders and ribs. The held breath creates and supports the stretch .in the ribs and upper body.

5. Hold the position and your breath as long as you can.

6. Now, quickly release your hands and breath. Your upper body will recoil from that tightly held twisted position. Keep both arms lifted up as you let go so that your arms will not bump against the chair and stop the recoil movement.

7. Now, turn to the right with the same movements and breath patterns that you did on the left. This time you will be raising the RIGHT ARM over the back of the chair and turning your torso and head to the right and the left hand will grasp the right arm of the chair. Remember to look with your eyes, far to the right and over your shoulder. Breathe in deeply to get the stretch in the ribs and the shoulders.

8. Release your breath with a quick blowing out as you release the grasp of both your hands on the back of the chair. Remember to hold your arms above the chair so that your torso can quickly swing back to the facing-forward position again.

