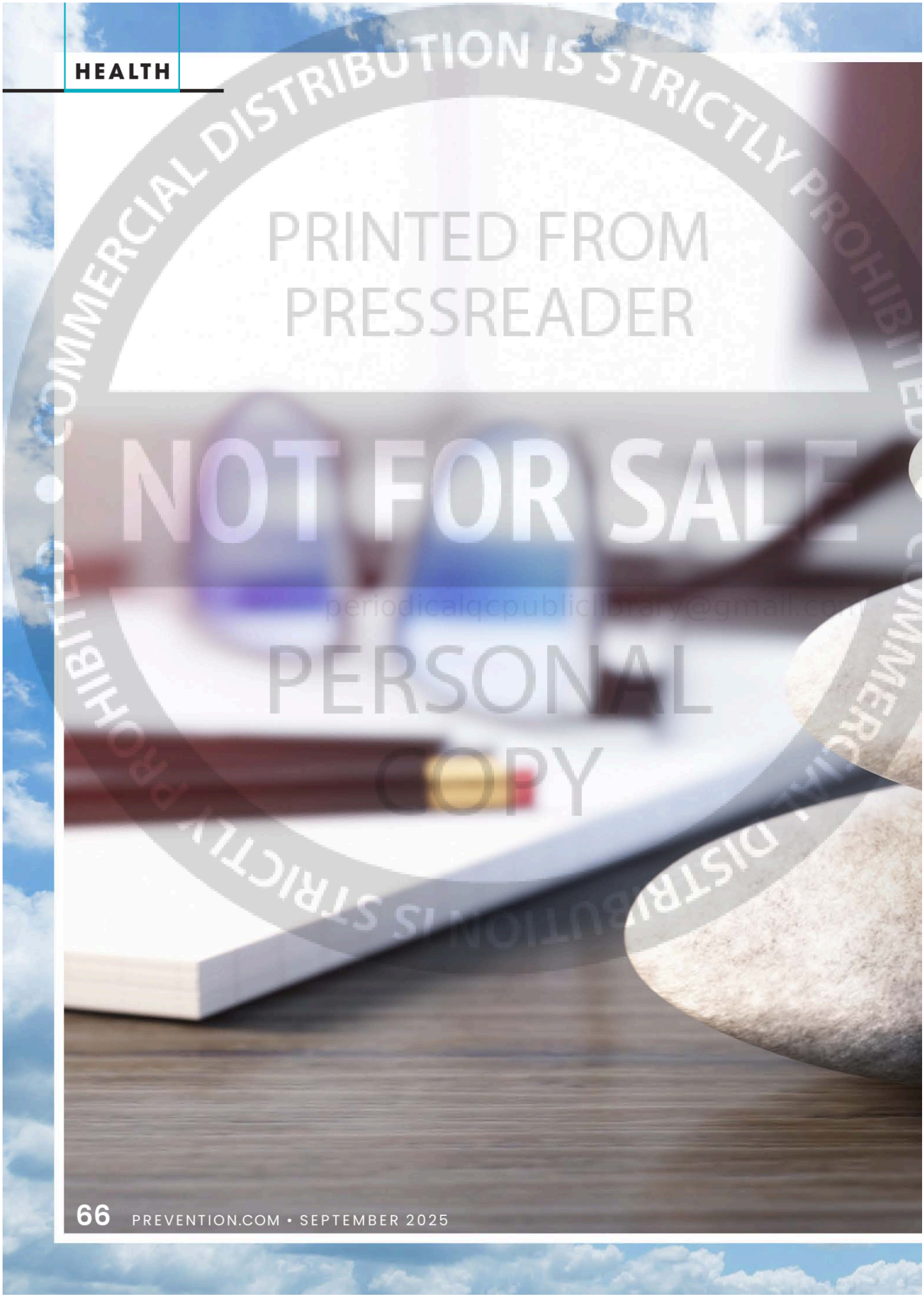
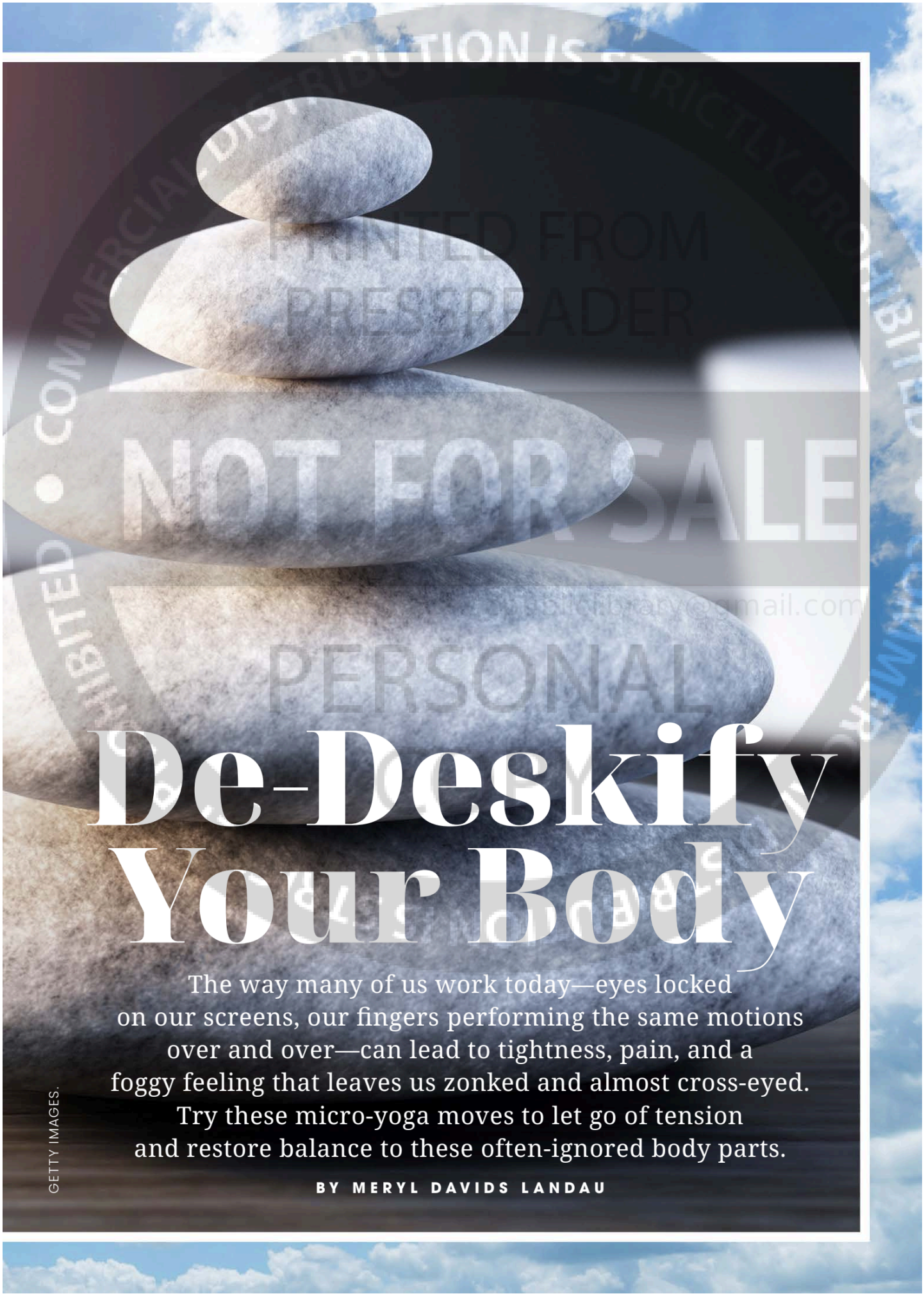
- Yoga



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De-Deskify Your Body

The way many of us work today—eyes locked on our screens, our fingers performing the same motions over and over—can lead to tightness, pain, and a foggy feeling that leaves us zonked and almost cross-eyed. Try these micro-yoga moves to let go of tension and restore balance to these often-ignored body parts.

BY MERYL DAVIDS LANDAU

GETTY IMAGES.

When most of us think of yoga, we think of big whole-body moves that challenge your flexibility and strength—and we love that. But your smaller joints and muscles need a little love too, especially if you work at a desk.

This routine was developed by Jyoti Gautam, a senior yoga teacher at Kamalaya Koh Samui, a holistic wellness spa in Thailand. "The whole concept of yoga is itself therapeutic," says Gautam. "The sequence we designed here is for all types of people—those who have any ailments in the body can also use it as a supplemental practice," along with their regular treatment.

The moves on these pages focus on the eyes, arms, wrists, and hands: They "improve joint flexibility, increase blood circulation, enhance awareness, and provide better coordination," says Gautam. You can do the whole series or pick a section or two as needed (visit prevention.com/full-yoga-routine for the second part of this routine, targeting your shoulders, neck, and chest). Do the poses cross-legged on the floor rather than on your swivel chair—so you can focus on yourself rather than on work, work, work.

REVITALIZE YOUR EYES

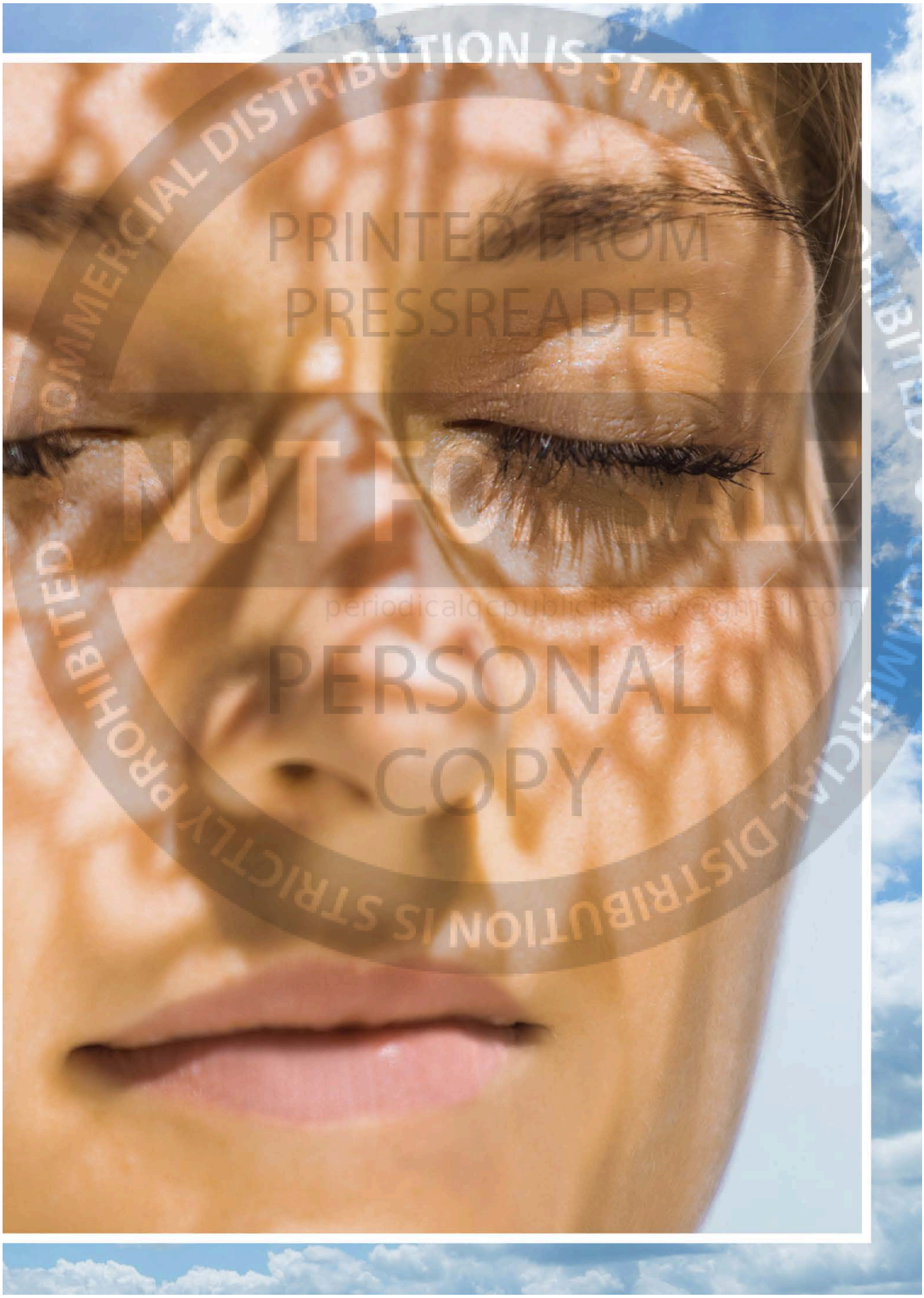
Keep your head steady throughout all these poses—move only your eyes—to improve flexibility in your ocular muscles.

Two thumb gazes

1. Look around the room by stretching your eyes left, right, up, and down and to the corners. Make a loose fist with your right hand and hold it at eye level about 12 inches in front of you, thumb pointed up; place your other hand on your chin to keep your head still.
2. Breathing normally, follow your thumb with your eyes as you slowly swing your arm right until the thumb is almost out of view; hold for seven seconds. Slowly track its return to center.
3. Bring your fist in toward your eyes, holding it a few inches in front of you for several seconds, then back to the starting position. Repeat four times.
4. Next, head still, move your arm to your lower field of vision, continually tracking your thumb. Hold for several seconds. Track your thumb above your head, holding for several seconds.
5. Return your arm to center, switch hands, and repeat the full sequence.

GETTY IMAGES (2).

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Large eye circles

Left arm in front, thumb up and elbow straight, make five large clockwise circles in front of you, eyes tracking your thumb throughout. Repeat, moving counterclockwise for five circles.

Diagonal gaze

1. With both thumbs up, stretch your left hand down at your lower left side and raise your right thumb up to the right. Slowly shift only your gaze from one to the other. Repeat 10 times; reverse arms and repeat 10 times.
2. Lower your arms and blink quickly 10 times. Tightly close your eyes, then open them wide several times.
3. Rub your palms together to generate heat and gently cup your palms over your eyes. Repeat a few times.

RELEASE ARMS AND WRISTS

Loosen the muscles of your hands that may be taut or tired from lots of device clutching or keyboard use.

Wrist action

1. Make fists, thumbs tucked in. Stretch your arms straight in front of you.
2. Arms still, inhale and flex your wrists to raise knuckles to 12 o'clock. Exhale and pivot your fists down to 6 o'clock. Repeat 10 times.
3. Next, arms still straight, circle your wrists clockwise five times, then counterclockwise five times.
4. Stretch all 10 fingers wide as you exhale. Inhale and make tight fists. Repeat five times; lower your arms.

Hand press

1. Widen your elbows out to your sides and place the lengths of your fingers gently together, keeping your palms apart. Inhale, then exhale and press your fingers together firmly with each exhalation. Repeat six times.
2. Press your palms together as well, spreading your fingers wide. Exhale and feel the stretch as you lower your hands to your abdomen, palms together. Inhale as you press and raise your hands. Repeat six times.

GENTLY UNKNOT YOUR FINGERS

Banish the effects of a tight mouse grip with these easy stretches, which will limber up your fingers and hands.

Finger swings

Lift elbows to shoulder height. With fingers separated and wrists steady, inhale and press the fingertips of both hands downward, then exhale and raise them. Continue in a gentle swinging motion, repeating six times.

Grab and release

Straighten both arms in front of you. Envision two large doorknobs and

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GALLERY STOCK.

grab them, tensing knuckles. Hold for several seconds, then release and flutter your fingers. Repeat five times.

Finger pulls

1. Inhale as you stretch your right arm forward, straightening the elbow. Exhale and use your left hand to gently pull right thumb toward you, arm steady. Hold for several seconds, breathing normally.
2. Use your left hand to rotate your right thumb five times clockwise and five times counterclockwise. Inhale and stretch your right thumb toward your body, then exhale and bend it forward.
3. Repeat for each finger of your right hand, then switch hands.
4. Tighten your fists, then open your hands wide. Repeat several times. Shake out all your fingers.

For the rest of this workout—targeting your chest, shoulders, and neck—visit prevention.com/full-yoga-routine.