

Paycare

Everyday Health Cover since 1874



Stand Up For Your Health

WHY SITTING IS BAD FOR YOU, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Stand up for your Health

It's really no surprise that sitting for long periods of time is bad for you, not just physically, but mentally too.

For those leading a more sedentary lifestyle such as office workers, reducing the amount we sit down during the day without impacting on our productivity can be difficult. Studies have shown that many of us spend up to 12 hours a day¹ on our derrières either at work looking at a computer, or at home winding down in front of the TV.

And that's not taking into account our sleep, either. Many of us will spend around 19 hours of our 24 hour days sitting and lying down. Wowza! But while there's a long way to go yet before Britain reaches Denmark's standards of increasing activity (the Government has made it mandatory for all employers to provide staff with sit-stand desks!), there are ways in which we can make small changes to make a big difference to our health.

In this guide, we look at exactly why sitting down for too long is bad for our health, and share some valuable top tips and tricks on how to get moving more.



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¹BBC News – October 2013

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Why sitting is bad for you.



Slows Metabolism

Prolonged sitting can slow down the body's metabolic rate and cause **minimum calorie burn**, which is why it's been linked to **weight gain, high blood pressure, obesity, and heart disease**. Essentially, the longer that you're seated, the more chance there is of developing those nasties. Not only can these physically impact your body, but as a result of developing such issues, **your mental wellbeing can also be affected**, possibly causing distress, stress, and anxiety.



Increases Risk of Diabetes

In addition to a slower metabolism, sitting down for most of the day will impair our body's ability to **handle blood sugar**, causing a reduced sensitivity to the hormone insulin, which helps to carry glucose from the blood into the cells so it can be used for energy. Having too much insulin can cause a **crash in the system**, which can lead to diabetes.



Causes Back Problems

One of the **most common problems** associated with sitting is back pain and aches, inflexible spines, and **disk damage** (by being compact, collagen builds up around tendons and ligaments).



Deteriorates Muscles

Sitting doesn't use any of your ab muscles and not much of your glutes, which means they can go **unused for hours** at a time and therefore soften, impacting your overall fitness levels and making you **less flexible, strong, and balanced**. We should aim to do simple stretches every 30 minutes or so, just to keep them working.



Squashes Your Organs

Unless your posture is in tip top, we can get in the habit of **slouching over the desk** which affects our spine, back and neck, in addition to squashing our insides, making it harder for the blood to reach our vital organs. This is why we can feel sluggish, lethargic, and **lacking of energy**.



Causes Leg Disorders

It's often thought that standing up for long periods of time can cause **blood to rush to our feet**. But by sitting, we use our legs less and it can cause blood to pool around our ankles, eventually leading to swollen feet, varicose veins, **and potentially even blood clots**. So, let's get wiggling our toes and moving our legs!

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What you can do about it!

So, now we've looked at just a few reasons why sitting down for too long it bad for you. But let's now look at some simple ways in which we can make changes:



Take regular breaks from your computer screens



Stand up when the phone rings, or when you're making a call (which is also proven to make you sound jollier!)



Walk to colleagues' desks instead of emailing them



Host stand-up team meetings



Go for a walk at lunchtime



Take the stairs and not the lift



Keep office supplies a short distance away from you, so you have to get up to reach them



Stand at the back of the room during presentations



Use a small cup to drink water from at your desk and get up regularly to refill it

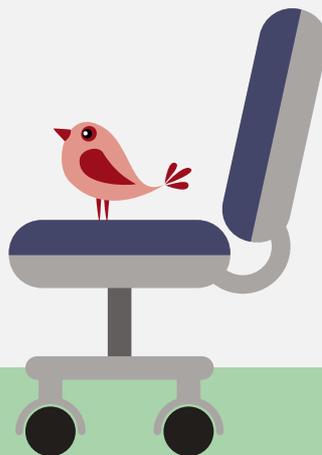




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How do you make sure you're active at work?

We'd love to hear your ideas, so please do get in touch on 01902 371000 or email enquiries@paycare.org.



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