

SITTING IS KILLING YOU

The Truth About Sitting Down

Whether tending our crops or hunting wild boar, most of our lives as humans were lived on our feet. But with the advent of TV, computers, and the desk job, we're sitting down more than ever before in history. And we're sitting, even more time than we spend sleeping (7.7 hours). Our bodies weren't built for that, and it's starting to take its toll. You might want to stand up for this.

SITTING INCREASES RISK OF DEATH UP TO 40%

Sitting 6+ hours per day makes you up to 40% likelier to die within 15 years than someone who sits less than 3. Even if you exercise.

Average Physical Activity (Walking Hours):

- Sedentary: 0.7 Hr/Day
- Low-Intensity Physical Activity (Walking, Standing): 6.5 Hr/Day
- Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (Running, Sports): 9.3 Hr/Day

Studies show that only reducing sitting time helps. It's clear that sitting is killing us; but how?

SITTING MAKES US FAT

These people sit for 2.5 more hours per day than thin people.

4 in 8 Americans is obese.

Between 1980 and 2000:

- Exercise rates stayed the same
- Sitting time increased 8%
- Obesity doubled

Sitting expends almost no energy

% ENERGY INCREASE ABOVE SITTING

Activity	% Energy Increase
Standing	~10%
Classical Dance	~15%
Swimming	~100%
Extreme Sports	~150%

Effects of sitting aren't just long term, though. Your body goes into meltdown the moment you sit down.

HOW SITTING WRECKS YOUR BODY

As soon as you sit: Electrical activity in the leg muscles shuts off. Calorie burning drops to 1 per minute. Enzymes that help break down fat drop 90%.

After 3 hours: Good cholesterol drops 20%.

After 24 hours: Insulin effectiveness drops 24% and risk of diabetes rises.

People with sitting jobs have twice the rate of cardiovascular disease as people with standing jobs.

HOW TO GET OUT OF YOUR CHAIR ALIVE

For many of us, sitting for 7 hours a day at our job is inevitable. But it's the extra sitting outside of work that turns a serious problem deadly.

The recommended 30 minutes of activity per day is not enough. Interrupt sitting whenever you can.

Stretching, Walking/Marching In Place, Jumping Jacks

Walking burns 3-5 times the calories that sitting does. Take every opportunity to walk around the office.

OFFICE STRETCHES TO DO AT YOUR DESK

KEEP YOUR BLOOD MOVING AND YOUR MUSCLES WARM!

You've probably heard how bad it is for you to be sitting at a desk all day, and maybe even felt the pains yourself in your back or wrists from constant computer use. Eight hours of sitting a day is quite a long time, and can really take a toll on your health in the long run, contributing to weight gain, increased cholesterol levels, and even heart disease. So we gathered up some quick exercises you can do right at your desk that will keep you moving and stretch out your muscles to avoid those aches and pains at work!

NECK



Neck Roll Close your eyes and let your chin drop down to your chest. Begin to circle your neck slowly, taking the right ear to the right shoulder, the head back, and then the left ear to the left shoulder. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed and not hurry through areas of tightness. Do 3-5 rolls in one direction, and then switch directions for another 3-5 rolls.



Shrug it Off Inhale deeply and shrug your shoulders, lifting them high up to your ears. Hold for a few seconds, then release and drop. Repeat three times. Shake your head slowly, yes and no. Repeat several times to relax your neck.

SHOULDERS



Shoulder Stretch Start by stretching the back of your shoulder by placing one hand under your elbow, then lift your elbow and stretch it across your chest. Don't rotate your body as you stretch. Hold for 15-30 seconds. You'll feel tension in the back of your shoulder. Relax and slowly return to the starting position, then repeat with the other arm.

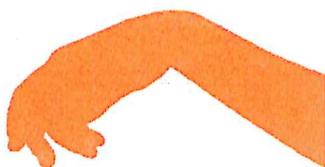


Wall Push-Ups Stand facing the wall, roughly a foot away, and push yourself off the wall with your arms. Not an intensive workout, but it will get your blood moving and stretch your shoulders.



Upper Arm Stretch Lift one arm and bend it behind your head, then place your other hand on the bent elbow to help stretch your upper arm and shoulder. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then relax and slowly return to the starting position. Repeat the stretch with the other arm.

WRISTS/HANDS



Wrist Roll Roll your wrists regularly, around every hour or so. Roll the wrists 10 times clockwise, then 10 times counterclockwise. This will help prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome if you spend a lot of time typing.



Wrist Stretch Stand up and turn your hands so that the wrists face your computer and the fingers touch the edge of the desk. Lean in to the wrists and flatten your palms as much as possible. Back off if you feel pain.



Hand and Finger Stretch Extend fingers open as far as possible and hold for 5 seconds. Then make a fist as tight as possible and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat this several times.

BACK



Lower Back Stretch Sit forward in your chair and bring one of your knees toward your chest. Use your hands to grab the back of your thigh and gently pull it toward you. Keep your back straight, and be careful not to lean forward. Hold for 30 seconds. You'll feel tension in your lower back and the upper part of your buttock. Relax and slowly return to the starting position, then repeat the stretch with the other leg.



Back and Bicep Stretch Place your hands on the edge of your desk and 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. Repeat 15 times.



Reach For The Sky Sit up tall in your chair or stand up and stretch your arms overhead, interlocking your fingers. Turn the palms to the ceiling as you lift your chin up, tilt your head back, and gaze up at the ceiling, too. Inhale, exhale, release. Stretch both arms over your head and reach for the sky again. After 10 seconds, extend the right hand higher, then the left.

Yoga for Back Pain

Yoga poses that can alleviate acute back pain



Urdhva Hastasana (Upward Salute)
Urdhva Hastasana literally translates to "Raised Hands Pose," but it is also sometimes called Takasana, the Palm Tree Pose (Taka = palm tree).



Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow or Wheel Pose)
Strengthens the arms, legs, abdomen, and spine, and gives a boost of energy.



Virabhadrasana II (Warrior II Pose)
Named for a fierce warrior, an incarnation of Shiva, this version of Warrior Pose increases stamina.



Parivrtta Parsvottasana (Reversed Side Angle Pose)
One of three revolved variations of standing poses.



Dhanurasana I (Shirshajai's Twist)
This gentle twist is a tonic for the spine and the abdominal organs.



Parivrtta Trikonasana (Reversed Triangle Pose)
Usually a counterpose to Trikonasana. Also a preparation for seated forward bends and twists.



Dandayama (Staff Pose)
It might look easy, but there's more to Staff Pose than meets the eye.



Sphinx Pose
Sphinx Pose is the infant of backbends. It can be practiced with either an active or passive approach.



Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana (Reversed Head-to-Knee Pose)
There are two interpretations of the Sanskrit Janu Sirsasana, Head-to-Knee and Head-of-the-Knee. The former emphasizes the forward bend. The latter refers to the "head" of the bent knee that you use to pull away from you to assist the forward bend.



Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)
The torso and legs represent the body of the bow, and the arms the string.



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Bridge Pose)
Calms the brain and reenergizes tired legs.



Ushtrasana (Camel Pose)
For this pose you can pad your knees and shins with a sticky folded blanket.



Marjaryasana (Cat Pose)
This pose provides a gentle massage to the spine and belly organs.



Bitilasana (Cow Pose)
Cow Pose is an easy, gentle way to warm up the spine.



Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Facing Dog)
One of the most widely recognized yoga poses. An all-over, rejuvenating stretch.



Garudasana (Eagle Pose)
You need strength, flexibility, and endurance and unwavering concentration.



Urdhva Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)
Triangle Pose is the quintessential standing pose in many styles of yoga.



Agrostasana (Fire Log Pose)
Stretches the outer hips intensely, particularly the psoas, which is often the main culprit of acute pain.



Matsyasana (Fish Pose)
It is said that if you perform this pose in water, you will be able to float like a fish.



Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose)
This twist strengthens the spine and stimulates the digestive fire.



Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose)
Highly effective strengthening for the legs and ankles.



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Bridge Pose)
An effective means for strengthening the back of the torso, legs, and arms in preparation for the sleeper.



Marjaryasana II (Marji's Pose)
Marji's Pose is sometimes called the Sage's Pose.



Halasana (Plow Pose)
Plow Pose reduces backache and can help you get to sleep.



Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)
Provides relief from backache and stretches the hips, hamstrings, and calves.

Low Back Pain

quick reference sheet

Almost everyone has low back pain at one time or another. Fortunately for most people, episodes of back pain are brief. The pain goes away gradually over a few weeks. If your back pain is keeping you from working, it may help to know that most people with back pain are able to return to their jobs quickly. Very few people end up suffering for very long or are permanently unable to work. Low back pain is usually not serious, gets better within a few weeks, and should not keep you from being active for long.

Here are some important tips if you suffer from low back pain:

LIFTING	
<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO lift and carry objects close to your body. DO bend your knees as you lift—make your legs do the hard work, not your back. DO turn with your feet as you lift. DO know your own strength. Only lift as much as you can handle comfortably. 	<p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DON'T lift objects away from your body, with arms outstretched. DON'T lift with your legs straight. DON'T lift and twist in one motion. DON'T lift objects that are too heavy for you.
SITTING	
<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO sit in an upright chair with your knees level with or higher than, your hips. Keep your ears, shoulders, and hips in a vertical line. DO sit with a rolled-up towel or other support behind your lower back. DO stretch and walk around after 30 minutes of sitting. 	<p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DON'T slouch in your chair. DON'T sit without back support. DON'T sit for long periods of time.
STANDING	
<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO put one foot on a low box or stool. Switch feet every few minutes. DO have your work surface at a comfortable height. 	<p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DON'T stand for long periods of time without changing position. DON'T use a work surface that is too low (requires you to bendover) or too high (encourages you to raise your shoulders).
SLEEPING	
<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO use a firm mattress or put a board beneath your mattress to add support. DO sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees. DO sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them. Do practice good body mechanics. 	<p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DON'T sleep on a too-soft mattress. DON'T stay in bed too long. DON'T sleep on your stomach.

Keep moving. It's natural to want to avoid using your back when it hurts. However, for most types of back pain, inactivity—especially bed rest—has been shown to do more harm than good. Bed rest can slow the healing process and make your muscles weaker, tighter and more painful.





Exercises for the workplace

Even 30 seconds of focused breathing will make a difference in your overall health and mindset. If time permits, spend 2 minutes with each exercise listed below:



Neck Rolls:

Seated with a straight spine, relax the head, neck and shoulders as you exhale. Shoulders are drawn down toward the floor.

Inhale: Head up at center

Exhale: Chin to chest

Inhale: Turn head to look over left shoulder, and then draw head up to center

Exhale: Chin to chest

Inhale: Turn head to look over right shoulder, and then draw head up to center

Exhale: Chin to chest

Repeat in the opposite direction with same breathing pattern.



Shoulder Rolls:

Seated with a straight spine, relax the head, neck and shoulders as you exhale.

Inhale: Draw the shoulders up toward the ears

Exhale: Roll shoulders toward the back and down (blades come together)

Inhale: Roll shoulders forward and up toward the ears

Exhale: Roll shoulders toward the back and down (blades come together)

Repeat in the opposite direction and reverse breathing pattern:

Inhale: Shoulders back and up to ears

Exhale: Shoulders forward and down



Spinal Waves (Flexion & Extension):

Seated with a straight spine, relax the head, neck and shoulders as you exhale. Hands rest on the thighs.

Inhale: Draw belly and chest forward, shoulders & elbows back, arching the spine

Exhale: Tuck tailbone under, belly moves toward the spine, shoulders forward, rounding the spine, chin to chest. Continue for several breaths, breathing at your own pace.

Standing Forward Bend:

Standing tall, feet hip distance, hips face forward. Bend the knees slightly.

Inhale: Roll the shoulders back, coming into a gentle backbend

Exhale: Bend the knees and round the spine as you round down over the legs, drawing the sitting bones back, crown of the head faces the floor, lift the sitting bones toward the sky and notice how that naturally straightens the legs.

Inhale: Come up with rounded spine, one vertebra at a time

Other resources on the Web:

excellusbcbs.com (health & wellness, search health topics)

www.usasearch.gov (search for desk stretches)

www.cdc.gov



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