

STAND UP FOR YOUR

Let your feet lead you to better health – one step at a time,



WARNING:

The chair you're sitting in while reading this article could possibly be hazardous to your overall health!

Even if you do the recommended 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity at least five days per week, it's how you spend the remaining 23½ hours of the day that really matters. A new and emerging area of science, called 'inactivity physiology', exposes the hidden dangers associated with prolonged sitting – something all too common in modern society.

What is inactivity physiology?

Research shows that vital enzymes in your legs' blood vessels, which are responsible for siphoning fat out of the blood, virtually shut off when you're in the seated position. The excess fat floating around your bloodstream can negatively alter your cholesterol levels, increase your risk of heart disease, and contribute to obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Prolonged sitting time also translates to a loss of muscle tone and definition. Even if you go to the gym, the negative effects of a full day of sitting can 'undo' all your hard work. The good news is that incorporating more standing and light activity into your day, independent of time spent in the gym, 'reactivates' these enzymes, burns more kilojoules and improves overall health.

Declare your life a no-sitting zone with the following tips:



#1 Don't get trolleyed at the supermarket

Nix the trolley! A hand basket increases the gravitational load on your body and forces you to expend more kilojoules. Besides working your hips and legs, the additional weight also helps sculpt your shoulders and arms.

"Pushing a trolley repeats the same poor postural position most people live in on a daily basis – rounded shoulders, slouching forwards, like when working ▶

HEALTH

says clinical exercise physiologist William R. Sukala



Fitness in New Zealand. “Companies hire ergonomics consultants to make the office environment more comfortable, but are inadvertently sabotaging their employees’ health and productivity by keeping them ‘comfortably’ seated for longer.”

#3 The family that moves together stays together

Stand at your kids’ sporting events or extracurricular activities, or take it one step further and get involved as a volunteer. “With both child and adult obesity on the rise, you can’t afford to sit idle on the sidelines,” says Morwenna Kirwan, exercise scientist with CQUniversity’s Centre for Physical Activity Studies in Queensland. “Volunteering is a great way to keep active, spend quality time with your children and reinforce positive images of physical activity.”

#4 Beachy keen

When beach weather is here again, try not to just loaf around on a towel. Take advantage of the sun, surf and sand. “Walking on soft sand not only works your muscles and tendons harder, but can actually burn 30 to 50 per cent more kilojoules than walking at the same speed on a firm surface,” explains Carl Hammington, personal trainer and co-founder of Health + Fitness Dynamics in New Zealand.

on a computer or driving a car,” says Ian O’Dwyer, owner of Noosa-based Fitness Personally. “Regularly swap the basket from right to left hand, as this is one of the more functional movements you can give your body.”

#2 Stand and deliver... your work!

The sedentary workplace is the single biggest barrier to good health,

accounting for at least eight hours of wasted opportunity for movement each day. And the reality is that with a few modifications to your desk height, much of what you do while seated can be done just as easily in the standing position.

“The deeply ingrained notion that you have to be seated to work represents an outdated paradigm that has become a health liability in today’s modern world of rampant obesity,” says Jan Pearce, national fitness manager for City



Try out the TreadDesk
Walk the walk while you work

For the past century, we’ve been engineering movement out of our day, but recent innovations in the US are raising the bar for workplace health and are working movement back in to allow you to be simultaneously productive and expend

additional kilojoules during work hours.

One such innovation is the TreadDesk, the fusion of a desk and treadmill. The device (available from www.treaddesk.com), however, is not meant to be a substitute for regular, structured exercise. Rather, it’s a way of incorporating valuable

incidental movement into your day.

Regular low-level walking minimises the risk of lower back pain, reduces the imperceptible accumulation of creeping body fat, and improves your overall mood, leaving you feeling energised at the end of the day.



“The same rules apply to beach games like volleyball, frisbee or paddleball, but be sure to ease into it to avoid muscle soreness.”

#5 Home feet home

Counterintuitive as it may seem, take a stand against all the usual home-activity vampires like watching television or surfing the internet. According to the recent *Compendium of Physical Activities*, published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, you burn about 500kJ for every hour spent on your feet at home doing incidental movement. This means that just two hours of standing time per day over the course of a month will translate to a 1kg loss of body fat.

#6 Neutralise movement thieves

Hammington advises clients to minimise or avoid the more subtle activity thieves throughout the day – commuting, elevators, moving walkways. “Driving to and from work

can consume up to two hours of your day. Public transport, on the other hand, reduces costs and contributes to good health. Walk to the bus stop or train station, and choose to stand (using the hand rail for balance) instead of wrestling for a seat. Always take the stairs and avoid the lifts in buildings (unless you have a physical limitation),” he explains. “Small bits of movement today add up to big changes tomorrow.”

#7 Take the ‘rest’ out of restaurant

Surely you deserve downtime to relax and enjoy your favourite restaurant? “I don’t think people should be trying to burn kilojoules while they are eating or drinking – rather, they should be enjoying the time out and the experience or indulgence,” says Lisa Westlake, physiotherapist and award-winning fitness professional. “Walk to the restaurant or around the block before you head home. During office hours, replace a business lunch with a healthy walk and talk.”



“I am one of the many women who gained an excess 10kg by my mid-30s, and I wanted to shed the weight before my wedding,” says 35-year-old geriatric psychiatrist Dr Molly Davis. “I thought it was a brilliant idea to incorporate low-level

walking into my regular working day since I’m a doctor and work very long hours.”

So far, Davis has lost 4kg of fat and says she doesn’t expect any trouble dropping the next 6kg. “I truly think that this could be the answer to many of today’s most pressing

health problems – obesity and all its evil offspring including diabetes, high blood pressure, obstructive sleep apnoea, high cholesterol and, perhaps, even anxiety, disorders, depression, insomnia and seasonal affective disorder,” adds Davis. ▶



**Cramps?
Dull Aches?
Stabbing
Pains?**

**Don't wait,
take Buscopan.**



Always read the label. Use only as directed.
If symptoms persist, see your Healthcare Professional.

WORK IT OUT

Use the following table to estimate how many additional kilojoules you use up during incidental activities. First, take a look at your day and write down how much time you spend in the seated position compared to how much time you spend doing the activities (or comparable activities) listed below. Then multiply these 'movement hours' by the number of kilojoules in the row closest to your body weight. Unfortunately, we can't uninvent the office environment, so get creative on your own and find ways to be on your feet for longer – every little bit counts. And, remember, the chair is a luxury, not a requirement! 🍷



Kilojoules spent per hour while standing relative to body weight



Standing idle

50kg: 265
60kg: 319
70kg: 370



Talking on phone

50kg: 400
60kg: 475
70kg: 554



Reading

50kg: 400
60kg: 475
70kg: 554



Church

50kg: 400
60kg: 475
70kg: 554



Cooking

50kg: 441
60kg: 529
70kg: 617



Grooming (self-care)

50kg: 441
60kg: 529
70kg: 617



Laundry

50kg: 441
60kg: 529
70kg: 617



Light office work

50kg: 508
60kg: 609
70kg: 710



Washing dishes

50kg: 508
60kg: 609
70kg: 710



Shopping

50kg: 508
60kg: 609
70kg: 710



Child-care

50kg: 664
60kg: 794
70kg: 928



Gardening

50kg: 664
60kg: 794
70kg: 928

Source: Compendium of physical activities: an update of activity codes and MET intensities.