



HealthyLife® *Live*

Workday Movement

Key Take-Aways:

Our bodies are made to move. However, sitting (or standing) for extended periods of time is often a necessary and normal part of our workday or personal time. This mostly sedentary activity can negatively affect our physical, mental and emotional well-being. And, since we spend a significant amount of time at work, finding ways to add more movement during our workday can benefit our physical and mental health, reduce pain, enhance energy levels and problem-solving, and improve the overall quality of our day.

Benefits of movement

- Decreases sedentary behavior which otherwise raises the risk of premature death, heart attack and stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and other chronic disease risk factors
- Lowers the risk of back pain (and pain in other body parts, including repetitive strain injuries) by reducing pressure and strain on the spine, muscles and connective tissue and increases blood circulation everywhere
- Improves brain health and cognitive skills, such as learning, problem-solving and creativity
- Boosts mood and energy levels, lowers the risk for depression and anxiety
- Improves sleep quality

How much workday movement to aim for?

- All movement has benefits; move more, sit less
- Aim to do moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least 22 minutes/day (150 minutes/week) and muscle strengthening twice/week
- Stretching and balance movements are also beneficial
- Add short bursts of movement or exercise, e.g., 1-2 minutes each, 5 minutes each, 10 minutes each, etc.
- Choose what works best for your personal needs and preferences

Tips for adding more movement

- Set a timer every 30-60 minutes to move in some way
- Seek ways to walk more (e.g., park further away, take a lap around the office or office building, eat lunch away from your workstation, refill your water bottle, walk to a co-worker's workstation to ask a question, have walking meetings, etc.)
- Create mini-movement tasks (e.g., water the plants on your desk, take clothes out of the dryer, fill the bird feeder, etc.)
- Keep exercise aids close by, such as small hand weights, resistance bands, exercise mat, etc.
- Ask co-workers to join you in mini-movement breaks throughout the day for some added motivation and accountability
- Sit on an exercise ball, if one is available to you, which will improve your posture and engage your core stabilizer muscles

Tips for improving posture

- Learn how to ergonomically set up your sitting workstation to help prevent strain, pain and repetitive strain injuries
- Examples: Keep monitor an arm's length away, adjust chair height so knees are level with your hips and feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. See more tips available from online additional resources listed here.
- To help prevent eye strain, every 20 minutes, look away from the screen and focus on something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Or, look at a faraway object for 15 seconds, then at an object close to you.
- When standing for long periods of time: Wear comfortable and supportive footwear; wear support hose or socks; practice good standing posture (feet hip-distance apart, abdominal muscles engaged, shoulders upright, chin tucked slightly).

Try out the movement stretches and exercises from this workshop

Explore the sitting and standing stretching and movement exercises provided. Incorporate some or find more online.

Additional Resources:

- American Heart Association: How to be more active during the workday heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Adding physical activity to your life cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adding-pa/index.htm
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Setting up computer workstations osha.gov/etools/computer-workstations/positions

