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Move More - Sit Less

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Move More – Sit Less

Take a quick moment and ask yourself how much time, on average, you spend sitting throughout the day. Now think about how much of that time you spend sitting in one stretch. What did you come up with?

Unfortunately, the trend is that all of us are sitting more. Research shows that leading a sedentary lifestyle will lead to disease and a lower quality of life. According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for death (WHO, 2010).

The good news is that there are some basic simple changes we can all make to incorporate more movement into our daily lives. Here are a few ways of how you can move more and sit less:

Phone-walking: Every time your phone rings, get up out of your chair before you pick it up. If you have a portable handset or, of course, your cell phone, then walk in your office or living room, from one side to the other, while you talk on the phone. Do not sit down until you have hung up the phone. If you have a phone with a cord, then put the phone on speaker, stand up and walk in place by your desk.

The half-hour challenge: Use your cell phone to set an alarm for every 30 minutes. Once it goes off, you will have to complete a two-minute physical activity challenge. Examples for this challenge are:

- Walking in place
- Jumping jacks
- Walking lunges
- Sitting down and getting back out of your chair repeatedly
- Push-ups on the floor or on the edge of your desk

The lunchtime walkathon: No matter how long you have for your lunchbreak, plan to spend the first half of it walking outside (preferred) or in the building. The second half of your lunch break can be spent eating.

Build your own mini-fitness center: Equip your office or home with some fun pieces of fitness equipment that you can utilize for the half-hour challenges or at lunchtime as an alternative to walking. In addition, these items could be used during phone-walking. Ideas for cheap and easy-to-store equipment are:

- Resistance bands
- Dumbbells
- Jump rope
- Resistance ball
- Medicine ball
- Bosu ball

Create a standing work environment! There are two ways to do this: a) request your employer to exchange your sitting desk for a standing desk; and/or b) find a way to heighten your work place utilizing boxes or something else to raise the height of your computer. Forcing yourself to stand rather than sit, can make a huge difference in reducing your sitting time. By the way, “b” is possible; I have done this myself!

Start a walking club. Be the leader and start a walking club at your workplace or in your neighborhood to encourage each other to walk together at lunchtime or during other breaks you may be able to take.

Meeting time = standing time. Whenever a meeting is taking place, choose to stand or walk in the room (or outside) together rather than sit.

To start moving more and sitting less right away, use one or more of the suggestions above. Not only can it help you to become less sedentary, but you may also inspire your family, friends, colleagues or supervisors to move more as well. Create a physically active life today and live more fully! ■



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