

IS SITTING THE NEW SMOKING?

You may have heard that sitting is the new smoking. While this may sound like ridiculously overblown hype, the author of the phrase isn't backing down. He is Dr. James Levine, Director of the Mayo Clinic-Arizona State University. Dr. Levine goes on to say that "sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV and is more treacherous than parachuting." He concludes simply, "we are sitting ourselves to death."

The good doctor is not the lone alarmist. A swiftly growing number of experts, backed by mountains of research, argue that sitting for as little as two continuous hours increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cancer, back and neck pain and other orthopedic problems.

If your job demands prolonged periods of time spent sitting, this becomes even more of a concern. However, there are some things you can do to help yourself! Preventing and solving the problems associated with too much sitting is very simple. Here are four basic guidelines:

- 1. Reduce optional sitting in your life**
- 2. For every 30 minutes that you are sitting, move for at least 2 minutes**
- 3. Optimize position and mechanics whenever you can**
- 4. Perform 10 to 15 minutes of daily maintenance on your body**

None of these guidelines requires a significant change to your current lifestyle. In fact, you'll be pleasantly surprised at how easy and impactful these changes are and at the improvements in your health you'll see from these changes.

Guideline 1: Reduce Optional Sitting in Your Life

This guideline is self-explanatory. Sit only when necessary! You will be surprised at just how much sitting you do and where you can reduce or remove it. We still need to sit at the table, drive to/at work, fly, etc., but if you are like most people, you will find you can remove hours of sitting from your day without drastically changing your lifestyle. At work is the BIGGEST opportunity to reduce sitting. Switch to a standing desk wherever possible. By forcing yourself to stand more, you will find yourself stabilizing your body and moving a lot more.

Guideline 2: For Every 30 Minutes You Are Sitting, Move for 2 Minutes

This guideline is probably the easiest of all, sit less and move more. Standing desks are great because they create a more movement-rich environment.

April/May 2017 by Chris Padilla, Training Manager, NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, ND LTAP

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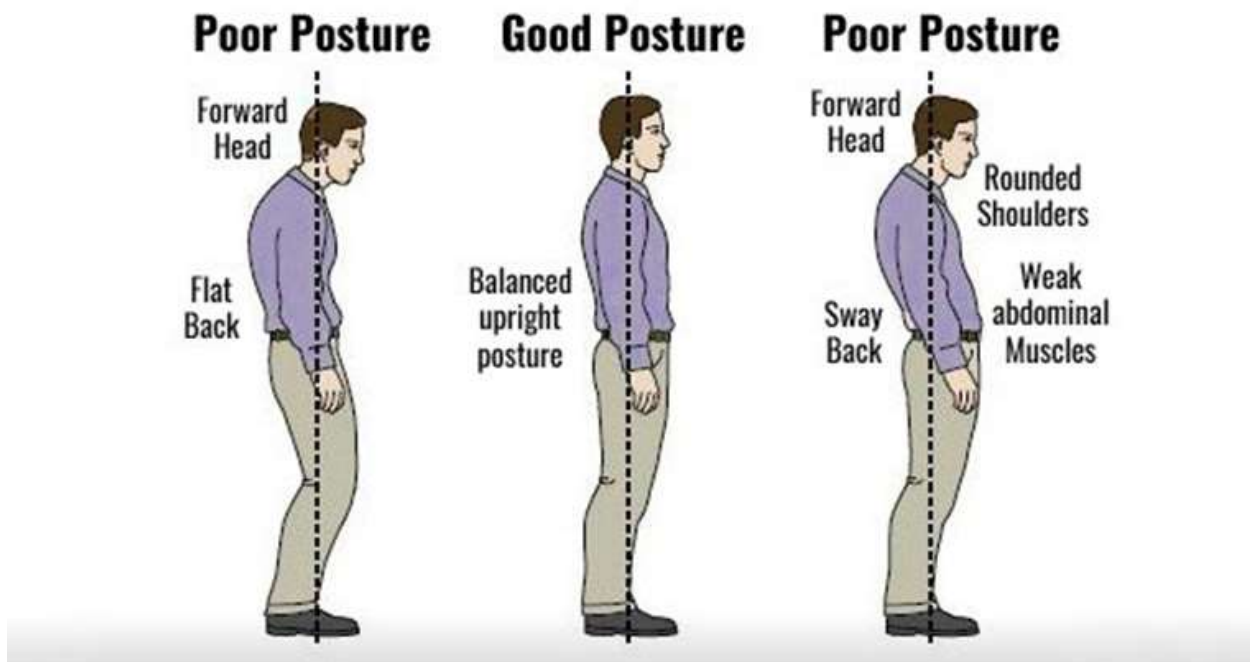


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At a standing desk, you can easily change your position and move. Movement does not need to be complex. You do not need to do jumping jacks, sprints, or burpees. Simple movements such as taking a stroll around the office, moving your limbs around to promote blood circulation, or for the best change, performing 10 bodyweight air squats. Movement is not only good for the body, but also the brain. We think better, we are more alert, and are more productive when we move.

Guideline 3: Optimize Positions and Mechanics Whenever You Can

It is equally important to ensure that when we are moving that we move well. We need to understand good body positions and how to organize the body to perform basic everyday human movements. Every time you tie your shoes, pick up items from the ground, or reach overhead, you are performing squats, deadlifts, and presses. Unfortunately, we commonly slouch as soon as we sit and this becomes first nature when we attempt to perform these basic every day movements. Frequently injuries are the result. Good posture and movement patterns are easily found by looking at the body like a connect-the-dots puzzle where you draw a straight line from the crown of your head to your ankles. The line should make contact with your shoulders, hips, wrists, knees, and mid-foot.



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Guideline 4: Perform 10 to 15 Minutes of Daily Maintenance on Your Body

There are no days off when it comes to performing basic maintenance on the body. Basic maintenance refers to mobility techniques used to resolve pain, improve joint and tissue range of motion, and restore suppleness to tight muscles. Many people mistakenly think stretching and mobility mean the same thing. Stretching is lengthening short and tight muscles. Mobility is a movement-based full body approach that addresses elements that limit movement and performance. Mobility is critical to improving the overall function and ranges of motion in joints. Some of the basic tools for mobility are: foam rollers, a softball, lacrosse ball, soccer ball and therapy bands.



Resources and Reference:

The information provided in this safety talk is based on my own professional training and certifications. I am certified as a CrossFit Trainer and Mobility Coach. I was trained and certified under the guidance and direction of Dr. Kelly Starrett using information from his books: *Becoming a Supple Leopard* and *Deskbound: Standing Up to a Sitting World*.

If you are interested in a training session that can be customized to your audience and workplace, please feel free to contact the ND LTAP office and coordinate with Chris Padilla, chris.padilla@ndsu.edu or (701)328-9867.

There are many resources about mobility. On YouTube there is a channel titled “MobilityWOD” and can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/sanfranciscocrossfit> on this channel, there are many videos specific to body part movements and mobility tricks to assist in proper mechanics and body positions.

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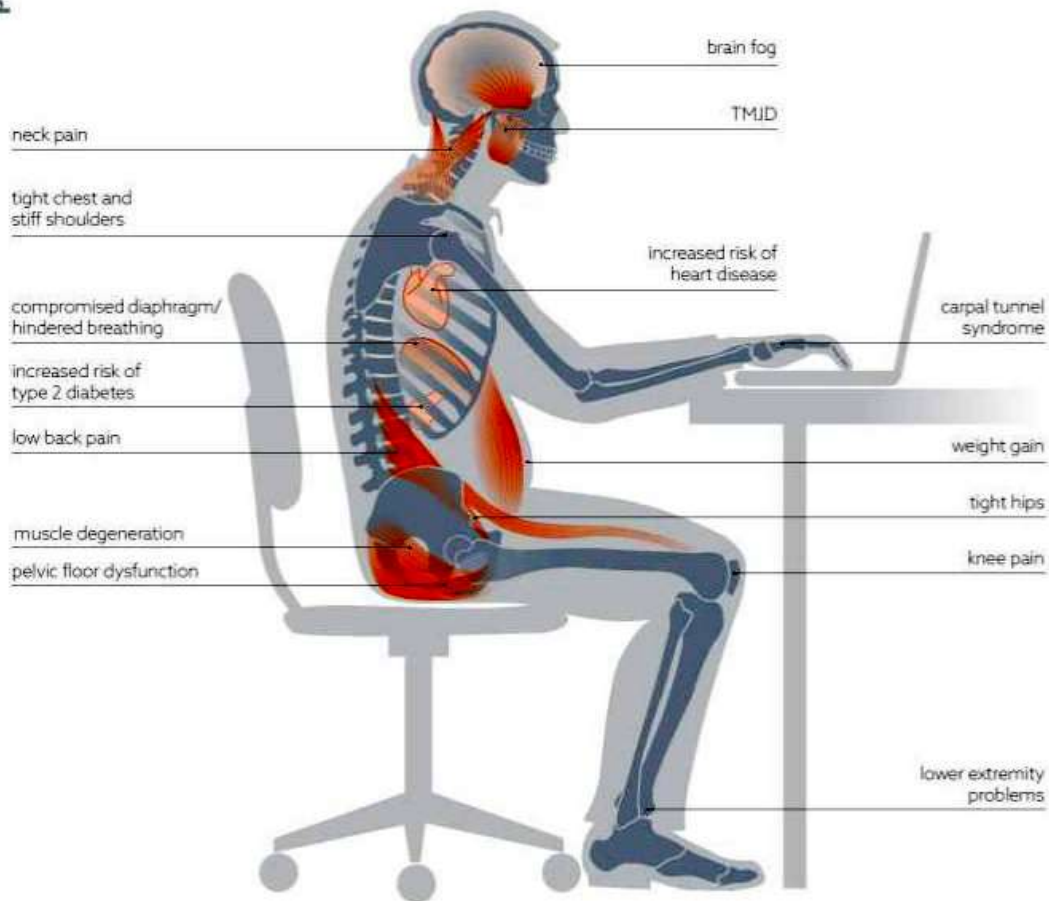
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Deskbound

The Ramifications of Sitting



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