

THE DANGERS OF SITTING: HANDOUT

Part of the **Health & Wellbeing Collection**

Sitting down can be a nice break during a busy day.

But considering the average worker now spends over 8.9 hours sitting each day, do you ever stop to think – how exactly is sitting for so long affecting my body?

The truth is, our bodies weren't built for such a sedentary existence.

That's right – you were built to move.

So, what happens when you don't?

Research suggests that sitting for more than 4 hours each day has some pretty serious effects on your body.

And here's the science to explain why...

Special enzymes in the walls of blood capillaries responsible for breaking down harmful blood fats temporarily shut down.

This means that, when you sit, you're not burning fat as well as when you move around.

In fact, calorie burning drops to about 1 calorie per minute.

This slowing of your metabolism also affects your body's ability to regulate blood sugar and blood pressure levels.

Irrespective of your level of physical activity, the result can lead to increased risks of heart disease and some types of cancers.

It can also contribute to diabetes, kidney and liver problems.

Perhaps most shocking of all, sitting for over six hours a day for a decade or two can actually result in you losing seven quality adjusted life years.

So simply put, sitting can kill you.

That's the bad news.

The good news... is you don't need to banish your chair and immediately quit your office job for a more active profession.

Happily, there are simple things you can do to ward off the dangers of sitting.

In this course, we're going to give you some simple activities that you can work into your day.

That's right, this factsheet is designed to get you moving, because it's time to stand up against sitting down.



HOW LONG DO YOU SIT AT WORK

When we're busy at work, it can be easy to prioritise workload over wellbeing.

But given that most of our waking hours are spent in the workplace, what we do during those hours has a massive impact on our overall health.

Have you ever worked out how long you actually sit down each day?

Before we continue, we want you to take a moment and think about it.

Start with your morning routine. Do you sit down whilst eating breakfast?

How about your commute? Do you walk, or are you sat in traffic?

Now think about how much time you sit when in work, or working from home.

What about when you get lunch?

And how long do you spend sitting eating dinner each night?

And finally, think about how much you sit whilst you relax, for example watching your favourite TV show after a long day.

It's easy to see how all this time sitting can quickly add up.

HOW LONG DO YOU SIT AT WORK

Move more, sit less

We're not saying that you shouldn't ever sit down.

But when you are sitting down for long periods, try to break it up, even if it's just for a couple of minutes.

Here are ten simple ways you can sit less during your working day:

- Take regular breaks from sitting by standing up every 30 minutes.
- Whenever possible, take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Stand up or pace while on the phone.
- Instead of emailing a co-worker, walk over and speak to them.
- Move your rubbish bin away from your desk.
- Limit your screen time.
- Drink lots of water, it's great for you, and will ensure frequent toilet trips.
- Hold a walking meeting.
- Try a standing meeting
- Try a sit-stand desk.



TAKEAWAY

The message coming from experts is clear, you need to spend less time sitting down.

We all know the risks with inactivity, but this factsheet is asking you to link regular exercise with reduced sitting time.

Especially at work, where the majority of us spend most of our waking hours.

Remember that you are designed to move, not sit still.

Now we figure that you've been sat down reading this factsheet for a good few minutes now – so it's time to get up and move!

