

Sitting all day is hard on the body

By Mandy Kendall

Well, we have been home for a week now following our amazing trip and not only have I had to pay attention to holding onto that relaxed feeling, I have also noticed how much I sit all day. While we were away there things to go and do, lots of walking and very little sitting. Now back at home I've realized how much I sit.

Writing emails, eating, typing articles, reading ... lots of sitting. Don't get me wrong, sitting can be very relaxing, but like most everything else, too much can be a bad thing.

Recent studies have shown that just the act of sitting can have far reaching health implications; an increase in the risk of stroke, metabolic disorders, cholesterol, heart issues and, dare I say it, an increase in the size of our behinds too.



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Unfortunately, making trips to the gym or exercising when we are not at work doesn't totally counterbalance the consistent hours of sitting we do during the day. Conversely, overly long periods of standing aren't the answer either as they can lead to back, leg and knee issues. (Things are never simple, are they?)

Men's Health magazine reported that we could burn up to 40 percent more calories when standing rather than sitting. Experts recommendations are that we should stand as long as we feel comfortable (and this may increase over time) but we should generally aim for a 50:50 ratio of standing to sitting. A lot of us have to sit for work, and that can't be avoided, but there are ways of making sure that we minimize the length of time we are seated. This may require a little modification of our work place, but the results could be well worth the initial inconvenience.

Olivia Hudson reported in the *New York Times*, "A study of people who sit for many hours found that those who took frequent small breaks – standing up to stretch or walk down the corridor – had smaller waists and better profiles for sugar and fat metabolism than those who did their sitting in long, uninterrupted chunks."

The following *Qwik-e* tips will give you some ideas on how to stand up and give your system (and your behind) some respite.

In the office

Get in the habit – Set a reminder on your computer to pop up every 30 minutes or so to remind you to do something that gets you moving.

Stand when on the phone – Ideally on a cordless device so you can walk around. If that's not possible, just stand in one place, but transfer weight back and forth from one foot to the other and then rise up and down on your toes too.

Stand when reading – As above, just be mindful of where you are walking if you've got your nose buried in a document.

Work station treadmill – Although a bit extreme, a treadmill in the office will offer a confined space in which to walk while talking on the phone or reading a document without the risk of tripping over things, or colleagues. Setting the speed

to low (one to two miles an hour) is enough to keep you moving without the risk of falling off.

Active sitting – *Huffington Post* offers some great ways to keep yourself moving, even if you aren't able to get out of your chair.

Gym ball chair – A great way to keep your core muscles engaged when you are sitting. Just make sure you get advice on the right size of ball for your height.

Standing workstation – Whether using a specially designed table, or just raising your laptop and monitor to a height where you can use it standing will give you the option work standing or sitting.

Standing/walking meetings – Depending on the number of people present, a meeting could be held with everyone standing or even going for a walk if the numbers aren't too large.

Away from the office

Meeting friends – Try going for a walk instead of sitting (again) in a bar or restaurant

Watching TV – Try standing for some of the program (or definitely during commercials at least) or sitting on a gym ball instead of the couch.

Chatting on the phone – Plug a pair of headphones into the phone, pop it in your pocket and do something while you're chatting. It's a great way to multitask and stay moving at the same time.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-

being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.