

Workers take a stand against sitting

By Doni Bloomfield, Bloomberg

Tim Tyrrell's bosses wouldn't pay for a standing desk, so he took matters into his own hands.

The software engineer in Austin, Texas, used parts from Ikea for a makeshift desk to prop up his keyboard and monitor, letting him avoid the excessive sitting he had heard was bad for him. Other co-workers did the same. His employer at the time, HomeAway Inc., has since relented, converting the office's more than 800 desks so they're now adjustable.

Employers are under increasing pressure to give desk-bound workers more options to get out of their chairs as evidence mounts that sitting for long periods is unhealthy – even for people who are otherwise in good shape. While the desks can cost thousands of dollars apiece, companies have to weigh the expense against showing concern for employees' health.

An analysis published this week in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* is likely to give concerned workers more ammunition. Researchers dug through data in 47 separate studies to conclude that longer sitting time was associated with higher risk for death, heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. This can lead to life expectancies that are years shorter, according to David Alter, the paper's lead author and a researcher at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute.

Sitting for hours every day was correlated with bad health even for people who exercised frequently, he said. The study didn't find that sitting caused people to die or get sick, and didn't seek to explain why there was an association.

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