

Why Sitting Is So Bad For You And How To Protect Yourself

For destinymgmt.com By John Roark, ManRevived.com

Most people sit for hours and hours every day. Of course, with the way our society is today, sitting for long periods may sometimes be unavoidable...but it can take a serious toll on your body.

To lower your risk of health issues (and death), you should be aware of the risks of sitting and [do your best to prevent them](#).

How Much Time Do We Spend Sitting?

The average American adult sits in the car on the way to and from work, sits at a desk job all day, and sits on the couch to relax in the evening. It's estimated that most people spend six to 12 hours per day sitting down, which is not what the human body is meant to do. Humans have evolved throughout history to be highly active, and our bodies haven't caught up to our sedentary environment.

Many people have to commute to work in a car or on public transportation, and sedentary desk jobs are becoming more and more commonplace. When you get home from work in the evening, you may feel so tired that all you want to do is crash on the couch.

To be clear, you're not lazy just because you spend so much time sitting down. Our society and lifestyles have changed so that sitting is the natural state of being. However, it's not healthy for your body, and you should make an effort to fight back.

How Is Sitting Affecting Our Health?

It's not simply an issue of bad posture or neck strain. Sitting for a prolonged amount of time has both short-term and long-term effects on your overall health. Here are some of the biggest problems associated with sitting:

1. Increased Risk of Death

People who spend more than 13 hours per day sitting are twice as likely to die early as people who sit the least. Your risk of early death increases as the amount of time you spend sitting increases. This risk exists even if you exercise every single day.

2. Obesity and Diabetes

People with sedentary jobs are twice as likely to develop diabetes as those with more active jobs. In one study, researchers controlled subjects' diets to see the impact sitting has when

other variables are accounted for. The subjects who sat the most gained the most weight, even though the rest of their routine was the same as the other subjects.

Your body burns more calories when you stand and move around than when you sit. Even just a couple hours of sitting a day can make a difference in how much energy your body expends. Also, your [insulin effectiveness](#) decreases as you spend more time sitting, which increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

3. Cancer

Spending too much time sitting can raise your risk of certain cancers. According to the National Cancer Institute, sitting is associated with a 30 percent increased risk of colon cancer, a 54 percent increased risk of lung cancer, and a 66 percent increased risk of uterine cancer.

4. Immediate Effects

Sitting does more than increase your chances of developing a disease or health condition later in life. As soon as you sit down, it starts to make a difference in your body. Your calorie burn rate decreases, the electrical activity in your legs stops, and the enzymes that break down fat drop dramatically.

After two hours, your good cholesterol levels drop by 20 percent. After a day of being sedentary, your insulin effectiveness decreases by 24 percent, and your risk of developing diabetes starts to rise.

What Can We Do About It?

Unfortunately, spending more time in the gym [isn't enough](#) to reverse the effects of sitting all day. The best thing you can do is prevent these effects from happening in the first place. You don't have to exercise all day, but increasing your activity as much as you can will help you stay healthy.

1. Take Breaks

The risks of sitting get worse the longer you stay still. Every 30 minutes, try to take a five-minute break and walk around. If you can't take this long of a break, even a minute of standing and stretching is better than nothing.

2. Use a Sit-Stand Desk

A sit-stand desk is a great tool for being more active during your work day. Standing still all day can be almost as harmful as sitting all day, but alternating between the two is better than being completely sedentary.

You should also fidget at your desk as much as you can. Fidgeting can increase your energy expenditure by 25 to 100 percent, which can combat weight gain and diabetes. Don't bother the people around you but try to quietly twiddle your thumbs or swing your feet while at your desk.

3. Avoid the TV

Spending hours in front of the TV greatly increases your risk of heart disease. You don't have to throw your TV away, but you should spend less time with it. Try to find an active hobby to keep you busy in the evenings. When you do watch TV, stand up and pace around occasionally to avoid being completely sedentary.

4. Be Aware of Your Posture

Sitting with perfect posture can still be harmful for your health, but bad posture is much worse. It's better to sit at a wider angle than to lean or hunch over, so remind yourself to lean back and relax in your chair while you're working.

If you have a long commute or an office job, you may have to go out of your way to be more active and prevent the harmful effects of sitting. You'll feel the benefits right away, though, and you'll be much healthier (and alive longer) in the future. Consider taking advantage of all of these [options](#) to help when for sitting can't be avoided.

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