



PROLONGED SITTING: *What It Does to Your Body, from Head to Toe*

You've probably already heard it—sitting too much can slowly kill you. Indeed, too much time in the chair can harm your body in multiple ways. Here's what happens from head to toe:

When you're sitting, blood flow to the brain decreases. When you're sedentary for a long time, everything slows, including the trigger of brain and mood-enhancing chemicals. So, if you're sitting and you begin to feel sluggish and groggy that's the reason why!

Again, when you're sitting less blood flows through your body. A long session of sitting can allow fatty acids in your body to more easily collect and begin to clog your arteries. **Prolonged sitting has been linked to high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol.** One recent study found that adults who logged more than four hours a day of recreational screen time (i.e., watching TV) had about a 125 percent increased risk of events associated with

cardiovascular disease, such as chest pain (angina) or heart attack compared to adults who spent less than two hours a day in front of the TV.

When we sit, we tend to slouch and moreover the core muscles in our body (the abdomen and lower back) are not engaged or used. **Repetitive and prolonged sitting can leave you with weak and mushy abs and a lower back.**

Plain and simple, prolonged sitting doesn't do your vital organs any favors. For example, a study published in 2011 found that the pancreas' ability to produce the proper amount of insulin (the hormone that delivers energy to your cells) can begin to decline after just one day of prolonged sitting.

Have you ever noticed that after sitting for a while that your legs feel almost numb, or perhaps restless and/

MOVE WHILE YOU SIT!

5 Exercises You Can Do at Your Desk

- 1. Shoulder shrugs.** Simply raise both shoulders up toward your ears, hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat 10-15 times.
- 2. Arm pumps.** While seated, pump both arms over your head for 30 seconds, then rapidly tap your feet on the floor, football-drill style, for 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.
- 3. Toe raises.** Lift your toes while keeping your heels firmly on the ground.
- 4. Leg extensions.** While sitting in your chair, extend your right leg until it is level with your hip. Hold as long as you can. Switch to your left leg and repeat 5-10 times.
- 5. Leg raises.** While sitting in your chair, lift your right foot a few inches off of the floor. Keep your back straight and your knee bent at a 90 degree angle and hold the position as long as you are comfortable. Switch legs.



or swollen? **When you sit for a long time, your blood circulation almost grinds to a halt, which can cause fluid to pool in your legs.** After time, prolonged, repetitive sitting can cause varicose veins or even blood clots in your legs.

Hopefully this information has gotten a rise out of you (literally!). **The good news is that you can combat the negative effects of sitting by simply getting up and moving for a few minutes every 60 minutes or so.**

SITTING

How Much is Too Much?

It's definitely clear that sitting too much is harmful to your health—but how much should you aim to get up during the course of the day? How long is too long to be sitting? When it comes to official recommendations for sitting, the guidelines simply aren't out yet. "Sitting disease" is a fairly new concept within the scientific research community. It took decades of research to determine the physical activity guidelines set forth by institutions like the CDC and the American Council on Sports Medicine—so it may take a few more years before experts provide specific recommendations for sitting.

For now, the key is seeking movement throughout the day whenever you can. If you're sitting for an hour, try to get up and stretch your legs for a few minutes. Try to incorporate movement throughout your day whenever you can. Even standing and stretching for a few minutes can help get blood flowing and combat the effects of sitting.