

How to migrate to a standing desk - the right way!



One 2014 study in the International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health found that giving a bunch of desk jockeys sit-stand desks reduced their sedentary time by more than three hours a week.

If you use a standing desk correctly you will have fewer muscle problems, an increased sense of well-being and energy, decreased fatigue and appetite – and keep your productivity steady.

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5 important steps to correctly migrate to a standing desk

1. Do not stand all day

Standing all day is no better than sitting all day, says Alan Hedge, a professor in the Department of Design and Environment Analysis at Cornell University. “If what you’re doing is replacing sitting with standing, you’re not actually doing your body any favors,” he says. “In fact, you’re introducing a whole variety of new risk factors.”

For example, standing too much can compress the spine and lead to lower back problems over time. It can also boost your risk for carotid arteries, varicose veins, deep vein thrombosis and other cardiovascular problems since the heart has to work against gravity to keep blood flowing up from your toes, Hedge says.

“If you go from sitting to standing and vice versa frequently throughout the day ... that completely eradicates any of the supposed risk factors associated with sitting, or indeed with standing,” he says.

2. Do not stand (or sit) still

Poor chairs. They’ve become the scapegoat for the dangers of sedentary behavior since most studies look at how much people sit, not how much they don’t move.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re standing or sitting, if you’re doing it statically, your body wasn’t designed that way,” says Ken Taneling, an ergonomic seating expert at the furniture company Steelcase. “You need to move.”

When you’re standing, that might mean using a foot rest to take the weight off of one foot and then the other. When you’re sitting, it can mean reclining so your legs and torso form a 135-degree angle – the healthiest seated position, Taneling says. “It might be making you look like you’re lazy, but you might be coming up with that next big idea.”

Even if you just fidget, “any kind of micro-movement is going to give you some value,” Taneling says. “The worst thing you can do is sit in one posture – basically what you want to do is ignore your first-grade teacher.”



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3. Use a standing desk for the right tasks

There's a reason why we drive sitting down, why some surgeons perform detailed surgery while seated and why you may feel less effective as a writer when upright: Our brains just perform some tasks – like those that require fine motor skills – better sitting down, Hedge says.

“The brain works by processing things sequentially, so it becomes hard to do multiple things at once,” he says. “The key here is don't throw everything away because we have really good chairs these days.”

If your job requires longer spurts of concentration, you may also want to avoid alerts that tell you when to sit, stand and move around since it takes 25 minutes to get back into that focused state after being interrupted, Tameling says.

For that reason, it's easier to work in (seated) “sprints” of 30 to 90 minutes. It's important to stand and sit, and your body does a good job of telling you when it's time to move.

4. Do not do it for the calorie burn

Standing burns about 20 percent more calories than sitting – but it also makes you tire more quickly, Hedge points out. “If your job is dependent on you not getting so tired, then you need to sit down for part of the day to do that job,” he says.

The extra 100 or so calories may not be worth the blow to your work and comfort. Plus, incorporating physical activity in other ways can be more effective – and fun. For example, do some squats while waiting for your lunch, take 20-minute walks outside and stretch your hips at least daily. Then you can still focus on your work, even if you're sitting all the time while you're working. It's more about the activity.

5. Not having your standing desk at the right height

When standing, it becomes apparent very fast when your desk doesn't match your height. A good rule to follow is to keep your elbows at no less than a 90-degree angle and your screen at, or slightly below, eye level. If you're having a tough time getting into the standing routine, this could make a world of difference.

Visit www.meetmilkdesk.com to learn more about the ergonomic MILK desk!

