

# Sedentary Behavior



To learn more about the Active Workplace toolkit, visit [www.YourWorkpath.com/toolkits](http://www.YourWorkpath.com/toolkits)



Joel M. has worked at a customer service call center for the last three years. Like many employees who work at a desk, he reports sitting for most of his workday. After work, Joel visits his mother in a nursing home or goes home and relaxes by watching TV. He reports not having the time or energy to move more during his day. Joel recently started using an active workstation and enjoys having the option to move while at work.

Think about how your own experience compares to Joel's, including how you spend most of your time at work and outside of work.

In this training, you will learn about sedentary behavior, the problem with sedentary behavior in the workplace, and strategies you can use to decrease sedentary behavior in the workplace.

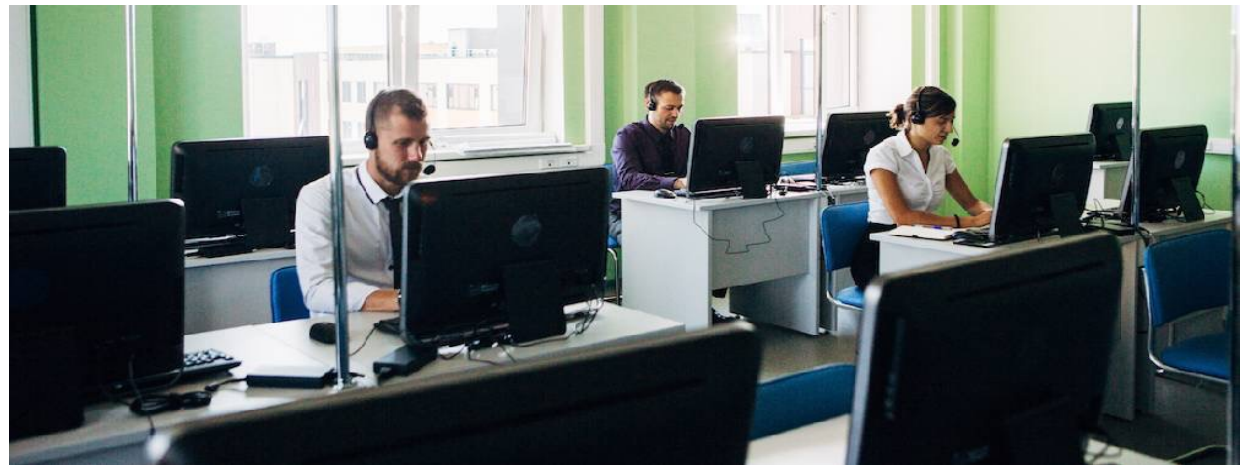


**Sedentary behavior** is sitting without otherwise being active, or any other behavior that expends a minimal amount of energy.

A person's occupation can contribute greatly to the amount of time they are sedentary every day. For most working adults, the time they spend at work contributes more to their total sitting time than when they are outside of work.

What does sedentary behavior look like in the workplace?

- Staying seated for long periods of time.
- Rarely getting up to move or walk around.



The amount of time a person is sedentary in the workplace varies because of factors like personal habits. However, there are several workplace factors that also have a big influence on sedentary behavior.

Below are examples of factors in the workplace that influence sedentary behavior:

- Access to active workstations
- Workplace infrastructure
- Office layout
- Workplace culture
- Workplace policies





Reducing exposure to sedentary behavior in sedentary occupations is important for the health and safety of workers because sitting for much of the day is bad for your health.

Prolonged bouts of sitting are linked to increased risk of:

- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Musculoskeletal pain and injuries

Apart from decreasing risk of the chronic diseases and musculoskeletal problems previously mentioned, there are many health benefits to decreasing sedentary behavior at work.

Benefits may include:

- More energy
- Improved concentration
- Improved mood
- Decreased stress
- Improved blood circulation
- Better sleep
- More calories burned
- Reduced sickness and absenteeism





Prolonged sitting is harmful to you even if you are physically active outside of work!

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. However, even if you meet this recommendation, your health and safety are still at increased risk if you work in a sedentary job and sit most of the day.

This means that going to the gym at the end of the workday is not enough to reduce the effects of a day's worth of sitting.





The first part of this training provided information about how factors from both the workplace and the individual contribute to sedentary behavior. Both the employer and worker have a responsibility to decrease sedentary behavior in the workplace.

Talk to your supervisor if you have concerns or ideas related to sedentary behavior in your workplace.



**The remainder of this training will provide strategies that you can use to reduce sedentary behavior at work and improve your health.**

These strategies include:

1. Alter the work environment
2. Change some daily habits
3. Create a schedule to remind yourself to move



# 1. Alter the work environment

In order to increase activity and decrease sedentary behavior in the workplace, we encourage employees to utilize active and standing workstations if they are available at your worksite:

## Examples include:

- Sit-stand desks - Alternate sitting and standing throughout the day. Stand for 2-4 hours a day, in bouts of 20-30 minutes each.
- Pedal stands - Try to accumulate 30-60 minutes of light pedaling a day. Pedaling at a low intensity won't interrupt your work and is enough to combat the effects of sedentary behavior.

# 1. Alter the work environment (continued)

Some workplaces may have standing height tables in break rooms. If you have access to these tables, you can increase standing time at work while eating lunch or taking a coffee break.





## 2. Change some daily habits

- Stand on the train or bus
- Park farther away from work to incorporate a walk to and from the office
- Take the stairs, walk up escalators
- Take a walk to the floor above your workstation every time you go the bathroom, get coffee, or water
- Don't sit on your lunch break - stand while you eat, then go for a walk
- Instead of sending an email or speaking over the phone, walk to a co-worker's desk and deliver the message face-to-face

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 9:30am Stand for 20 minu</li><li>● 10:20am Stand and Stretc</li><li>● 10:50am Pedal for 10 min</li></ul>	
20	21

### 3. Create a schedule to remind yourself to move

It is recommended that you get up and move for at least 2 minutes every half hour. This can seem like a daunting task, however with some planning you can efficiently create a schedule to make it happen.

We suggest you set an alarm on your phone or computer to remind you to move every half hour, and to help remind you to use active workstations if they are available.

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## Question 1 - Which of the following is a sedentary behavior?

- Walking to work
- Sitting
- Lifting weights
- Stretching

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## Question 1 Answer - Which of the following is a sedentary behavior?

- Walking to work
- Sitting**
- Lifting weights
- Stretching



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**Question 2 - Extended bouts of prolonged sitting are linked to increased risk of all of the following EXCEPT:**

- Musculoskeletal injury
- Obesity
- Healthier, longer life
- Diabetes

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**Question 2 Answer -Extended bouts of prolonged sitting are linked to increased risk of all of the following EXCEPT:**

- Musculoskeletal injury
- Obesity
- Healthier, longer life
- Diabetes

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**Question 3 - If you exercise every day after work, you can reverse the negative health outcomes that result from a sedentary job.**

- TRUE - If you work in a sedentary job, you can escape the negative health outcomes like increased risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes if you exercise every day.
- FALSE - While regular exercise is good for your health, it will not make up for the negative impact that sedentary work has on your health.

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**Question 4 - All of the following are environmental alterations that can be utilized to decrease sedentary behavior at work EXCEPT for:**

- Reclining desk chair
- Standing height tables in employee break rooms
- Active workstations
- Standing desks

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**Question 4 Answer - All of the following are environmental alterations that can be utilized to decrease sedentary behavior at work EXCEPT for:**

- Reclining desk chair
- Standing height tables in employee break rooms
- Active workstations
- Standing desks

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**Question 5 - Which of the following is a strategy to reduce sedentary behavior?**

- Stand on the bus
- Park farther from your office to increase the walking component of your commute
- Take the stairs
- All of the above are ways to reduce sedentary behavior

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## Question 5 Answer - Which of the following is a strategy to reduce sedentary behavior?

- Stand on the bus
- Park farther from your office to increase the walking component of your commute
- Take the stairs
- All of the above are ways to reduce sedentary behavior



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**Question 6** - It is recommended that you stand up and move at least \_\_\_\_\_ minute(s) every \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s).

- 1, one
- 10, two
- 2, half

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**Question 6 Answer - It is recommended that you stand up and move at least \_\_\_\_\_ minute(s) every \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s).**

- 1, one
- 10, two
- 2, half

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## Question 7 - Which statement is TRUE?

- Only the workplace, not the individual, has an influence on employee sedentary behavior.
- Only the individual, not the workplace, has an influence on employee sedentary behavior.
- Neither the workplace nor the individual influence employee sedentary behavior.
- Both the workplace and the individual influence employee sedentary behavior.

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## Question 7 Answer - Which statement is TRUE?

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# ACTIVE WORKPLACE

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