SIT TO STAND WORKSTATIONS

Ergonomics Program
Environmental & Occupational Health
Sitting down is KILLING you! Heart disease, obesity, depression and crumbling bones - a terrifying new book by a top doctor reveals they are all linked to the hours we spend in chairs

Sitting is the New Smoking—7 Ways a Sedentary Lifestyle is Killing You
The research is in on the sitting epidemic and the results aren't good

Sitting might not be so bad for you after all
Fact or Fiction?

- Sitting is bad. Standing is good.  
  There are pros and cons to each.

- It would be healthier to stand all day.  
  Static, sedentary behaviors can be harmful no matter which position you are in. Variation is key to protecting your body from injury.

- Standing will get rid of my pain.  
  Standing, alone, is not enough to get rid of the aches and pains you may feel from sitting. Often, discomfort is a result of poor posture or improperly adjusted equipment. Getting a sit to stand workstation won’t fix anything if you don’t also have healthy behaviors.

- Sitting is killing me.  
  Sitting is not killing you. There are many ways to incorporate comfortable sitting positions and movement throughout the day, which will help protect your body while sitting.
Takeaways:

• Both sitting **and** standing pose health risks if done incorrectly or for prolonged periods

• Make sure your workstation is adjusted to support proper posture

• Practice good posture
  • Slouching, leaning, and working in other awkward postures can aggravate muscles and nerves, causing pain

• Avoid static, sedentary behaviors
  • Standing is also a sedentary behavior, if you aren’t moving
  • Incorporate microbreak stretches 2-3 times/hour (5-10 second stretch every 20-40 minutes)
  • Vary your position, whether you are sitting or standing
  • Incorporate exercise in and out of work
    • Take the stairs when possible, incorporate movement at your desk, walk during breaks, etc.
    • Practice a healthy lifestyle outside of work. You can’t get home from work, plant yourself of the couch, and complain about the dangers of sitting at work… MOVE AROUND AND BE ACTIVE! That can mean exercising, cleaning, gardening, or whatever interests you!
Properly adjust your workstation

- Use the “Self-Assessment” pdf and/or “Ergonomics for Computer Users” video to guide yourself through properly adjusting your workstation found at www.uhs.wisc.edu/eoh/ergonomics/
3 Healthy Sitting Positions

1. “Proper Perch”
2. Using chair back support
3. Using back support in “extension”
Setting Up a Standing Workstation

- Adjust desk height so that your elbows are at 90-100 degree angles
- The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye-level
- Monitor should be 18-30 inches away from the eyes, or approximately arm’s length away
- Ear, shoulder, elbow, hip and ankles should be aligned
3 Healthy Standing Positions

1. Ear, shoulder, elbow in alignment with feet shoulder width apart

2. Ear, shoulder, elbow in alignment with feet positioned at a diagonal stance - left

3. Ear, shoulder, elbow in alignment with feet positioned at a diagonal stance - right
Avoid Static Postures

✔ Change your position (sitting or standing), incorporating the 3 healthy positions discussed

✔ Every employee should take a microbreak every 20-40 minutes (see our Microbreak handout)
  • A microbreak is a quick 5-10 second stretch taken 2-3 times per hour
  • Change your position after taking your microbreak stretch
  • To help make this a habit, consider setting timers on your phone or computer

✔ Throughout the day
  • Take the steps instead of the elevator when possible
  • Make sure to go to the bathroom and get drinks of water
  • Take 1 or 2 longer, 3-5 minute full body stretches during the day
  • Move during your break(s) - walk around the building, walk up and down steps, do some exercises in your office, etc.

✔ Outside of work
  • Incorporating a healthy lifestyle across all aspects of your life is the best way to avoid injury and illness. Eat healthy foods, drink water, get enough sleep, and stay active!
Microbreak Stretches

**Shoulder Shrugs**
- **STEP 1:** Arms relaxed by your side.
- **STEP 2:** Slowly roll shoulders straight up towards your ears.
- **STEP 3:** Square shoulders together, and let them roll down and back; movement should be smooth and circular, and should take 3-5 seconds; a mild, comfortable stretch should be felt through your shoulders and lower neck.
- **STEP 4:** Repeat 5 times.

**Wrist Extensor Stretch**
- **STEP 1:** Straight arm in front of you.
- **STEP 2:** Point fingers towards floor.
- **STEP 3:** Use opposite hand to mildly stretch the right wrist further; slowly rotate fingers to point away from body. A mild, comfortable stretch should be felt through the top of forearm.
- **STEP 4:** Hold 10 seconds and switch sides.

**Hamstring Stretch**
- **STEP 1:** Straighten leg out in front of you can be performed with your heel on 2-5" step or flat on ground.
- **STEP 2:** Lift toes on front foot up so only heel touches the ground on step.
- **STEP 3:** Keeping your back as straight as possible, bend forward from your hip. A mild, comfortable stretch should be felt at the back of your thigh.
- **STEP 4:** Hold stretch for 10 seconds, release slowly, and switch sides.

**Standing Back Bend**
- **STEP 1:** Place fingertips together in a prayer position (no other part of your head should touch).
- **STEP 2:** Slowly move hands down from eye level to chest level, slowly rotate fingers to point towards your chest; a mild, comfortable stretch should be felt through your fingers, hands, and arms.
- **STEP 3:** Hold stretch for 10 seconds, release slowly, and repeat 2-3 times.

**Arm/Shoulder Exercises**
- **10:** Reach your right arm out, palms facing towards the ceiling. Repeat on the left side.
- **11:** Cross arms above your head and push against each other, do 3-5 reps.

**Neck Exercise**
- **12:** Start with hands in a comfortable position. Slowly twist to left side to stretch the right side of your neck, repeat stretch for 3-5 seconds from second vertebrae over neck, move slowly. Repeat for right side and continue in a slow rhythm.

**Back Exercise**
- **13:** Make your hands into a fist and pull your chest towards your arm, repeat stretch for 3-5 seconds.

**Order Exercise**
- **14:** Cup your head over your arms, hold for several seconds, and slowly, slowly, slowly cup your arms over your head.
When a Sit To Stand Desk Might Not Be an Option

• Medical conditions
  • Pregnancy – standing over 6 hours per day has been linked to pre-term birth, low birth weight, and maternal high blood pressure
  • Scoliosis, Bulging Discs, Pinched Nerves, Plantar Fasciitis, Sciatica, Hemorrhoids, Osteoarthritis, and Deep Vein Thrombosis
  • Standing can cause → varicose veins and/or synovial joint compression which may lead to knee injuries

• Employee’s workstation design specifications
  • Some workstations do not have sufficient space for any style of sit to stand unit

• Lack of funds
  • At the end of the day, approval for sit to stand workstation comes from the supervisor and depends on your specific departmental budget. UHS does NOT supply funds to outside departments for ergonomic equipment.
Sit to Stand Workstation Options

*UHS does NOT supply funds to outside departments for purchasing ergonomic equipment*

- **Fully adjustable desks $900-1800**
  - Best option, if possible
  - Many styles, configurations, and brand/models are available on UW Contract
  - Prior to purchasing, note:
    - Height range
    - Weight limit
    - Warranty

- **Sit to stand desk conversions $350-600**
  - There are several models of desk conversions on the market (Ergotron, Varidesk, Humanscale, Kangaroo, etc.)
  - Ergotron and Humanscale sit to stand desk conversions are available on UW contract