



In Good Health Newsletter, August



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August

Health Risks From Sitting Still
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Physical Inactivity From Sitting Still Increases Health Risk

Sitting Raises Risk of Type II Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, and Early Death: A compendium of studies published in 2012 found that sitting for long periods raised the relative risk of type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease over 100%; the association was strongest for diabetes. The studies found this effect regardless of whether the sitter got the recommended amount of moderate and [vigorous intensity exercise](#) the rest of the day.

Sitting Slows Metabolism: Dr. Marc T. Hamilton says research shows that [fat-burning](#) is slowed by prolonged sitting, so you burn less fat when you finally get up and exercise. "[Sitting time](#) and [non-exercise activity](#) have been linked in epidemiological studies to rates of [metabolic syndrome](#), [type 2 diabetes](#), obesity and [cardiovascular disease](#)," Dr. Hamilton concludes.

Sitting Increases Diabetes Risk in Women: A study found that the more sitting hours per day reported by women over age 40, the more their markers of [insulin resistance](#) and inflammation were increased. This points to an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This was true whether or not they got moderate exercise each day.



Screen Time Is a Health Risk: Two hours a day of sitting in front of the TV or computer may double your risk of a heart attack or other cardiac event. Four hours a day of screen time increases your risk of death by any cause by 50%, according to findings of a study of more than 4,500 middle-aged men in Scotland.

Sit More-Die Younger: The American Cancer Society's Cancer II study of more than 100,000 healthy people tracked since 1992 found that women who sit for more than six hours during their leisure time each day had a 37% greater chance of death than women who sat for three hours or less. Men had an 18% greater chance of death. This finding was independent of whether the people got in a good dose of exercise each day. However, the good news is that those who also got exercise had a lower [risk of death](#) than those who didn't—just not enough to overcome the presumed effects of the sitting hours.

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Sounding the Alarm About Sitting!



An editorial in the British Journal of Sports Medicine concluded that "recent observational studies have suggested that prolonged bouts of sitting time and lack of whole-body muscular movement are strongly associated with obesity, abnormal glucose metabolism, diabetes, [metabolic syndrome](#), cardiovascular disease risk and cancer, as well as total mortality independent of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity," say the authors.



Top Tips to Stop Sitting Still!

Wear a pedometer Aim not only to increase your [total daily steps](#) gradually to 10,000 steps per day, but also to log 500 steps per hour to ensure you are not sitting still for long periods of time. If you carry your phone with you all day, you may only need a [pedometer app](#).

Treadmill Desk: Build or buy a [treadmill desk](#) so you can walk slowly while working on the computer, reading, gaming or watching videos.

- Schedule in 10 minute breaks at the same time every day and dedicate it to an activity of your choice.
- Park farther away from your work or anywhere you drive to.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Move around, stand up and stretch for a few minutes during every hour. You can simply wiggle around, take a few steps back and forth or march in place.
- Stand up when you're talking on the phone.
- Replace your desk with a standing desk and/or replace your desk chair with a stability ball. Stability balls can help strengthen your core as you improve balance and flexibility.

Sitting on a Long Commute?: Find ways to add in walking before or after a long commute ride sitting in a car, train, or bus. Park further from your office. Get on or off a stop early and walk the final stretch to or from your destination.

Screen Alerts: Those with computer-based jobs may want to install a program, such as **RSIGuard**, that pops up to alert them to move around each hour. For those tied to the cubicle, this can mean standing and walking in place, desk stretches, pacing while on the phone, etc.

Switch to Active Video Games: Rather than play sitting-based computer games, switch to a Wii or other gaming device that includes active games that have you standing and moving.

Don't Make Things Too Convenient: Don't surround your desk with everything you will need in easy grabbing distance. Place items further away so you will need to get out of your chair to get them.

Take Meetings Outside Your Office: Rather than having people come to you, get up and go to their office or invite them to meet while strolling.

Get Up and Talk Rather than Emailing or Messaging: Do you email people who are just a short walk away? Go see them face to face once in awhile.

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Did You Know?

Two-Minute Walk Breaks Improve Glucose Control and Insulin

Response: Breaking up sitting time with two-minute walk breaks every 20 minutes improved the body's response to a meal by 30% in a 2012 study. The study simulated an office environment with middle-aged, overweight people. Walking at light or moderate intensity for two minutes after each 20 minutes of sitting helped maintain glucose control and insulin response. There may be good benefits in developing habits of getting up more frequently during the workday and at home while video gaming, watching television or using the computer.



Are You A Sedentary Exerciser/Athlete?

What kind of an athlete are you? Unless you are a professional athlete who gets paid to train all day long, you may suffer from 'sedentary athlete syndrome.' The average recreational athlete today actually gets less activity than the non-athletes of the past. How can this be? Consider that most of us today move far less in our day-to-day lives than our parents and grandparents did even though they probably never went to the gym, had a personal trainer or took Crossfit classes.

If you exercise regularly, yet have a desk job, commute by car, look at a screen in your free time, it's likely that, even with the gym time you carve out, you may be more sedentary than previous generations who never exercised at all. Most people who consider themselves athletic or regular exercisers burn far fewer calories than they believe, eat more calories than they require, and spend the majority of their days sitting. **Statistics show that the average person sits a whopping seven to nine hours a day.**

Other studies show that, even if you are fit, or exercise an hour a day, long periods of inactivity and sitting is bad for your health. The more a person sits, the higher the risk of a variety of ailments and even early death. So even if you exercise regularly, it's important to find ways to simply move more each day.

Tips to Avoid Sedentary Exerciser/ Athlete Syndrome

- 1. Move More Each Day.** Invest in a stand-up work station or simply get creative with boxes, books a countertop and find a way to stand up while working on the computer. Stand during meetings on phone calls and walk to your coworker to talk rather than email or messaging them. Invite people to walking meetings. Make more quick trips to the restroom. Get up every hour to do a few push ups or jumping jacks. Get creative and just get up more often.
- 2. Design an Active Commute.** Bike to work, walk to work, park farther away, walk to the next bus stop. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- 3. Make Social Time Active.** Instead of going for drinks, dinner and happy hour with friends, take a walk, play tennis, play frisbee, go dancing. Be creative and catch up with friends during some activity rather than while just sitting.
- 4. Do More Chores Manually.** Get a push mower, rake, broom, and shovel and hang up all your gas and electric-powdered yard and house tools.
- 5. Drive Less.** Decide to give up your car a couple of days each week and commute, run errands and visit friends on foot or bike or mix public transit with self-propelled transit.

Calculate Your Daily Activity!

To get an idea of your actual 24-hour activity level and calorie burn, you can try out this [on-line total energy expenditure calculator](#).

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Staying Active in Hot Weather

Summer is a great time for being active. Even if you live where it gets hot or humid, there are ways you can stay in shape year-round. But make sure to take precautions when you are active outside.

Be Safe In The Heat

If the temperature is lower than 80°F (27°C), you usually can be active outside without taking extra precautions. It depends on how active you already are and how used to hot weather you are.

But anytime you exercise, it's a good idea to take these normal precautions:

- Drink plenty of water
- Don't exercise as hard when it is hot. Take rest breaks. Exercise more slowly than usual for a shorter time.
- Stay in the shade when you can
- Avoid exercising during the hottest times of the day
- Wear light colored breathable clothes
- Watch for signs of heat exhaustion, such as nausea, dizziness, cramps, and headaches. If you notice any signs, stop your activity right away, cool off, and drink fluids.

When the temperature gets above 80°F (27°C), consider the heat and the humidity. Both can put you at risk for heat-related illness. The hotter or more humid it is, the higher your risk. For example, if the humidity is 60% (moderate):

- Be careful when you exercise in temperatures of 80°F (27°C) to 85°F (29°C). Find shade, take regular breaks, and drink plenty of fluids.
- Experts advise being extremely careful between about 85°F (29°C) and 91°F (32.8°C).
- Conditions are considered extremely dangerous at temperatures over 91°F (32.8°C).

When it is more humid, you should be careful at even lower temperatures. Higher humidity can make it feel hotter, since your body cannot cool off as well by sweating. This puts you at a greater risk for illness. For more information, see the website www.nws.noaa.gov and search for "heat index."

Older adults and children are at a higher risk for heat-related illness and should be extra cautious. Remind children to drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after activity.

If you are overweight, have health problems, take medicines, or use alcohol, you may be at a higher risk for heat-related illness. You may also have trouble if you're not used to exercising in warmer weather.

Staying Active in Hot Weather

In hot weather, drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after activity. Water or sports drinks are best. This helps to prevent dehydration and heat-related illness. Water is all you need if you are exercising for less than an hour. For longer exercise periods, sports drinks contain carbohydrate and minerals called electrolytes that may help your endurance and keep you from getting muscle cramps.

Call or other emergency services immediately if you have stopped sweating or have other signs of heatstroke, such as a fast heart rate, passing out, high body temperature, feeling confused, or having no energy. Heatstroke is very dangerous.



Outdoors

When it's hot or humid, be active during the cooler times of day. Find shaded areas, like parks with big trees, and drink plenty of fluids. You have less chance of getting too hot if you do lighter exercise, like walking. Be sure to wear sunscreen.

- Take morning or evening walks. Walking the dog or walking with a partner helps you make it part of your routine.
- Go for a bike ride. Find shaded areas, and ride during cooler times of day.
- Go **swimming** on hot days. This is a healthy family activity for summer.
- Do light yard work or gardening. You'll burn calories while you keep the yard looking good.
- Wash your car. This gets you outside and helps you burn calories. Give yourself a splash to stay cool.

Indoors

- Go for walks at the mall. Use a phone app or a pedometer to count your steps. You can set walking goals to help you stay motivated.
- Use light weights or stretch bands at home. You'll stay fit while you watch TV or listen to music. Lift cans of food if you don't want to buy weights.
- Use an online exercise video or a smartphone app. You can stay in shape while you stay cool indoors.
- Go dancing or take dance lessons. Or just turn on some music and dance in your living room. This gets you moving so you burn calories.
- Do indoor housework like dusting, vacuuming, or washing the windows. This helps you stay active while you keep your home looking good.
- On trips, stay at hotels with fitness centers or **swimming** pools. Make time for a workout. Take a jump rope to use in your room.
- Join a gym or health club. You can take classes or use machines, like treadmills, stair-climbers, or stationary bikes. Many cities have community centers that offer affordable fitness classes. If you have health problems, ask your doctor before you use machines or take classes
- Join sports programs in your community or at work. Many cities offer indoor sports like basketball, volleyball, and soccer..

Smoky Baked Bean Medley

A well-known side dish at [backyard cookouts](#), baked beans are a staple on any picnic table. This version is loaded with dietary fiber—5 grams per half cup as well as protein, [potassium](#), and [iron](#) from a trio of [luscious legumes](#): black beans, pinto beans, and kidney beans.

Ingredients

- 2 15-ounce cans tri-bean blend (kidney, pinto and black beans), rinsed and drained
- 2 8-ounce cans tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon raw, unpasteurized apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey

Preparation

- 1 Preheat oven to 350F.
- 2 Add beans and tomato sauce to an oven-safe bowl. Stir gently until combined.
- 3 On the stovetop over medium-low heat, add oil to a small skillet. Heat for 20 seconds; add shallots. Saute for a few minutes until translucent. Remove from heat.
- 4 Add cooked shallots to bowl with beans and tomato sauce. Add in paprika, garlic powder, apple cider vinegar, and honey. Stir gently until combined.
- 5 Place in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes; check and stir. Bake for 15 to 30 minutes longer to allow the flavors to meld together. Remove from oven and serve.

Total Time **70 min**

Prep **10 min**, Cook **60 min**

Yield **Serves 6 (203 cals for 1/2 cup)**



Ingredient Variations and Substitutions

The smoked paprika in this dish contributes to its signature, mesquite flavor. If you desire, you can add more smokiness with bacon. Choose a nitrite/nitrate-free, uncured variety and use only a small amount. Toss in green onions or scallions instead of shallots, or whole garlic cloves for a more bold bite. To turn up the heat, add a few squirts of sriracha.

You can use any type of bean or lentils in this dish, too. It works well with [any bean or legume](#).

You can puree whole tomatoes for the sauce. Use agave nectar instead of honey for the sweet notes, or if you want a zero-calorie sweetener add a packet of [stevia](#).

Cooking and Serving Tips

The longer you cook this dish, the better. The flavors blend together the more it cooks.

This is a great dish for the slow cooker, too. Serve while warm. Store any leftovers in the refrigerator to eat within 3 days of cooking. Reheat in the oven for 15 minutes or in the microwave for less than a minute.

These baked beans can be spooned onto a baked potato or ladled over cooked quinoa or brown rice.