

Feel Well

# Fighting sedentary activity.

Too much time spent sitting down can cause us health problems for both body and mind. Find out about the risks of sedentary activity and how to build activity into your daily routine.



## What is sedentary activity?

Sedentary activity is time spent sitting down, and we're doing too much of it as a nation. Many adults sit for periods of up to nine hours a day, whether that's at work or at home. Sitting too much is a health crisis that's affecting all ages group in the UK, from schoolchildren to the retired.

Most of us know that we should be taking regular exercise, but we are less aware of the health risks associated with too much time spent sitting down.

## What happens when I sit down for too long?

Sitting down for long periods at a time takes its toll on your physical health. Research has shown that your metabolism slows down when you're not moving regularly. That means your body struggles to regulate blood sugar and blood pressure.

If you sit down for extended periods, you run a greater risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some forms of cancer and early death.

## How much should I be moving?

Current NHS guidance recommends that adults exercise every day – some movement is better than none.

Every week, you should aim to get:

- 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity, or
- 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity

### Examples of moderate activity

- Riding a bike
- Walking briskly
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Mowing the lawn

### Examples of vigorous intensity activity

- Aerobics
- Jogging or running
- Riding a bike uphill or fast
- Playing team sports like football, rugby or hockey

## Strengthen your muscles

It's really important to keep your muscles strong as well as taking regular moderate or vigorous intensity exercise. Activities that strengthen your muscles help to slow down the age-related loss of bone and muscles. Many muscle-strengthening activities can be easily fitted into your everyday routine.

You could try:

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Carrying shopping bags
- Lifting children
- Gardening like digging
- Weight-lifting
- Wheeling a wheelchair

## Move more and sit less

The good news is that with a little effort, we can reset our bad sitting efforts and learn how to move more in our daily lives. If you work in an office job, take small steps to introduce more movement into your work day. Similarly, if you're home-based, take frequent breaks from sitting - whether that's to put the kettle on, run upstairs or to do some housework or gardening.

### Top move more tips at work

- Walk as much as you can on your commute
- Walk to colleague's desks instead of emailing
- Take the stairs rather than the lift

### Top move more tips for home

- Run upstairs a few times a day
- Have a break every hour of sitting
- Stay active – whether that's with housework or gardening



**A report carried out by British Health Foundation in 2017 estimates that 20 million UK adults aren't physically active at all.**