

Be Well, Stay Well

Stop sitting, start moving!



Did you know that sitting for prolonged periods of time affects your health? Studies have shown that six hours of sitting or more per day can raise your risk of obesity, increased blood pressure, increased blood sugar, cardiovascular disease and colon cancer. Even if you're getting regular exercise, sitting for hours at a time can have huge impacts on your health.

Nowadays, many of us have jobs that make us sedentary. We do most of our work sitting, often at a computer. While this type of work can't be avoided, there are things you can do to get more active throughout the day.

Take frequent breaks

Short, frequent breaks can be just as beneficial as a longer length of exercise and is easier to find the time to complete. At least once per hour, take a few minutes to stretch or take a short walk. You'll get those muscles moving and feel more energetic when you get back to work.

Mix it up

Standing while you work is a simple way to decrease your sitting time. However, standing for prolonged periods can also cause problems, such as sore feet or back. Try alternating between sitting and standing while you work. Take a phone call while standing, or work in even more movement by pacing back and forth or doing calf raises (raising up onto your toes to work your calf muscles).

Get face time

Technology such as email and phones have made our lives easier but make us more sedentary in the process. Instead of sending an email or making a phone call to someone in the office, take a walk and have a face-to-face chat. You'll be more active and you may get to know more people!

Watch TV

You don't have to feel guilty about watching TV when you get home – just get active while doing it! If you have exercise equipment, such as a treadmill, place it in front of the TV and walk while you watch. If you don't have any equipment, try doing push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks or jogging in place during the commercials. Challenge yourself to do as many reps as you can before your show starts.

Benefit Options
Choice Value Health

American Health
American Health Holding Inc

Sources: WebMD, CNN.com

Need some motivation or ideas for how to get moving? Nurse coaches in **Disease Management** are available to help you get more active. Get tips on exercise, diet, managing your condition and more.

Nurse coaches can provide support if you have asthma, chronic kidney disease, COPD, chronic pain, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

To enroll in the program, call 1-866-244-8977

Take a break!

Stretch at your desk

Sitting at a desk all day can cause tension to build up in our muscles. Relieving stress and staying stretched out throughout the day is essential to good health. Incorporate these stretches into your frequent breaks to keep you limber. Don't forget to breathe and relax to release stress!

Neck, shoulders and back

Reacher

Lift your hands above your head and reach for the ceiling, releasing the tension in your back and neck. If the back of your chair is tall enough, allow your back and head to rest against the chair back while stretching upward. Hold for a few seconds.

Let your hands and arms relax beside you, but leave your back and head (if possible) resting against the back of the chair. Take a few deep breaths to release stress. Repeat as many times as needed.



Funky Chicken

Place your fingertips on your shoulders with your elbows pointed out to the sides. Pull your elbows back as far as you can, then bring your elbows forward and try to touch them together. Repeat 10 times. Now, keeping your fingertips on your shoulders, lift your elbows up and then bring them down to your sides, as if you're trying to fly. Repeat 10 times.

Legs and hips

The Cross Over

Sit forward close to the edge of your chair. Cross your right leg over your left knee, resting your right ankle just above the left knee. Lean forward, bringing your chest toward the bent leg. Make sure to keep your back straight and avoid arching or slumping. Breathe and hold for few seconds. Repeat two or three times, then switch legs and repeat with the left leg crossed.

Hamstring Stretch

Extend your legs in front of you with heels resting on the floor. Sit straight up toward the edge of your chair. Lean forward with your back straight to feel the stretch in the back of your legs. Avoid slumping or arching your back. Allow your hands to gently slide down toward your knees. For a deeper stretch, elevate your feet on another chair.

Hip Stretch

Sit sideways on your left buttock toward the edge of the chair. Keep your left knee bent with the left foot resting on the floor, and stretch your right leg out to the side. Hold on to the chair arm or seat on the left side, lean forward slightly and slide your right foot out across the floor until you feel a slight stretch in your right hip and leg. Repeat on the opposite side.

Quad Stretch

Stand next to your chair with your left hand holding the chair for balance. Grab your right foot with your right hand (or grab your pant leg if you cannot reach your foot). Pull your foot toward your buttocks and hold for 10 to 15 seconds. Your knee should be pointing downward, not out to the side. Repeat two to three times with each leg. Work on your balance by removing your hand from the chair, little by little, as you hold the stretch.