

Get Up Offa That Thing

By Susan Schilke; November 1, 2015

You've probably heard some of the news about the latest threat to our health and well-being – Sitting. The studies are consistent and scary – for those of us who work in business, 'sitting disease' is a real danger, bringing with it an increased risk of dying from practically any disease you can think of.

How? Key fat burners shut off the minute we sit, and every two hours spent sitting reduces blood flow, raises blood sugar, and drops good cholesterol 20%. One study shows that reducing sitting time increases the length of our telomeres – the protective caps of DNA and protein that sit on the end of chromosomes protecting us from heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke.

For those of us who exercise daily, we haven't solved the problem. The studies show exercise does not reverse the negative impact of sitting all day.

I have a new Apple Watch, the sport version. I wanted to increase the measurements of my fitness activities beyond steps per day, and was most intrigued by the heart rate monitor on the watch. And while this feature has been valuable in measuring intensity of my workouts, it's not the feature that's changing my life.

The Apple Watch measures three types of activity – Move (calories burned from activity), Exercise (minutes of workout) & Stand (hours in which you stand). When I got the watch, I was interested in Move & Exercise, and didn't give much thought to Stand. I thought I was an active person.

I was wrong. The watch gives a reminder at 50 minutes after the hour if you've been sitting or inactive for the entire hour so far. It tells you it's 'Time to Stand,' and actually only gives you credit if you walk around and move for a few minutes. And I've learned how much time I actually spend sitting. Too much. The average office employee sits for about 10 hours a day. I am not doing much better.

The latest guidelines issued in June of this year encourage us to start standing up at work for at least two hours a day, working our way toward four. Simply standing works, and the use of sit/stand desks can really help, along with using your phone time to stand or walk while you talk. Hold walking meetings. Use the stairs. Take walking breaks. Mix up your day. Your metabolism slows down about 90% after 30 minutes of sitting. Just getting up for five minutes gets things going again.

My 30-Day Challenge for November is to increase my standing/walking hours to four a day. I'm going to keep track, and I think it's going to be tough. Members – look forward to some walking 1-1s!

Develop your own game plan for combatting sitting disease. Visiting www.justand.org might be a good place to start. Set a timer on your computer or phone to prompt for regular breaks and take five minutes to move each half hour. Get off your backside because sitting is bad for you. You'll feel better, be more productive, and live longer!

More resources:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2015/06/02/medical-researchers-have-figured-out-how-much-time-is-okay-to-spend-sitting-each-day/>

<http://www.juststand.org/tabid/800/language/en-US/default.aspx>