

Don't Forget to Move

If you've spent the last hour wading through your emails before reading this, then your large muscle groups are already deflating, your metabolism has slowed, and your biological switch has turned to the 'standby' position.

This isn't a reference to a horrible atrophy – this is a result of a normal working day, where the average employee only takes around 3,000 steps. This amounts to 24 minutes of physical activity in a 24-hour period – or to put it another way, 23 hours and 36 minutes of physical inactivity.

WE'RE DESIGNED TO MOVE

As humans, we're designed to move to stay healthy, but our modern responsibilities can get in the way of our physical needs. Prolonged and unbroken periods of sitting is a unique problem: it's associated with premature mortality, and the greater incidence of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, irrespective of time spent exercising.

Sitting is also associated with an increased risk of mental health disorders like anxiety and depression, leading to workplace fatigue, stress and absenteeism. Today, our workplaces can compound the problem with time-saving – or time-wasting – technology, which means more time attached to a computer in a way that is physically and mentally unsustainable.

The good news is that the mere act of getting up out of the chair is all it takes to break the cycle. Small, incidental changes - taking the stairs, conducting walking meetings, or hopping off the bus one stop

earlier - can all counter the cognitive and biological slowdown provoked by sedentary habits.

EXERCISE RIGHT AT WORK

May 23- 29 marks the beginning of Exercise Right Week, an annual campaign aimed at getting Australians more active. This year's theme is 'Exercise for the Right Reasons', with a bigger emphasis on what exercise can do for our physical, mental and social health.



The cost of absenteeism in Australia from poor physical and mental health is estimated to be around **AU\$7 billion each year**, which is why more companies are implementing health programs and strategies at work to reduce sitting time and encourage greater activity, both in and outside of the office. When employees are active, this can trigger a chain reaction of positives, including better mental health outcomes, improved sleep, less stress and resilience.

There are many ways both you and your organisation can promote activity and less time sitting:

Change the workspace: Bad posture is recognised as a workplace hazard, and musculoskeletal conditions associated with our sitting habits can be debilitating in the long term. A change to your workspace such as using a standing desk helps reduce time spent sitting – and it can be better for your posture. It's recommended that you should stand for 30 minutes every hour.

Shake up your commute: If you can walk, run or cycle to work, this can be a great way to include more exercise into your day and less time sitting to or from the office. Plus, it's a great mental health boost to help start your day!

FIND OUT MORE

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Of course, not everyone has the same commute. If this is not possible for you or you work from home, take care to implement more breaks in your day for activity.

Have standing or walking meetings: Feel like meetings go on too long? Try organising a stand-up meeting – research shows this can help increase efficiency and make meetings shorter, all without the help of a chair.

Take part in an office fitness challenge: It's easier to get (and stay) active when others are involved, especially when there's competition involved. You can organise one or try **Converge Move** to motivate and encourage employees to have fun and discover new ways to get moving.

Try an exercise app or fitness tracker: It's recommended that you take at least 8,000 steps a day, but if you're looking for some encouragement, tracking your steps could be the answer. There are also free apps to help you with daily step goals so you can improve each day.

If you're looking for a better way to stay active at work, the Converge International app is here to help if you want to **track your steps** (<https://converge.headuplabs.io/en>), manage your health, or just want some personalised tips. The app is free to download on the Apple store or Google Play.



Click here (<https://convergeinternational.com.au/service/converge-app/>) to learn more.



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