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## Standing Desks – Not the Solution to Sitting Too Much

Research about the dangers of sitting too much has led to the increasing popularity of standing desks. A 2012 Australia study found that people who sat for more than 11 hours per day saw a 40% increase in the risk of dying within the next 3 years when compared to people who sat for less than 4 hours per day. This study and others like it gave rise to the standing desk movement. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 13% of employers provided or subsidized standing desks in 2013 with that number increasing to 44% by 2017. While the dangers of excessive sitting are well documented, standing desks may not be the right solution.

### Dangers of Standing Desk

Standing all day is no better than sitting all day according to Professor Alan Hedge of Cornell's Department of Design and Environment Analysis. It can compress the spine and lead to lower back problems. Excessive standing also increases the risks for deep vein thrombosis and other cardiovascular problems because it forces your heart to work opposite gravity to pump blood up from your feet. A 2017 study of 7000 professionals in various fields found that those who stood the most had double the risk of heart disease over people who primarily sat.

### Activity Breaks

These apparently conflicting studies about the dangers of sitting or standing too much, may leave you wondering what is best. The answer isn't in a new desk or chair, but rather in combining both sitting and standing into your day. Hedge recommends follow-

ing a 20:8:2 regime where you sit for 20 minutes, stand for 8 minutes, and move for 2 minutes. By alternating between sitting and standing and incorporating movements like gentle stretching or walking into your day, Hedge believes that you can "completely eradicate any of the supposed risk factors associate with sitting or indeed with standing".

Maintaining one static position, whether standing or sitting, throughout the day is detrimental to health. Ergonomic expert, Ken Tameling recommends that people find ways to move even if it is just fidgeting. According to Tameling, "The worst thing you can do is sit in one posture" and "any kind of micro-movement is going to give you some value." For sitting, he recommends using a 135-degree angle between your legs and torso instead of sitting straight up or hunching forward. For standing, he suggests using a foot rest to alternate the weight between your legs. The goal is to avoid overstraining any one set of muscles by maintaining a static posture.

### What This Means for Counties

Standing desks are not the solution to avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. Rather incorporate a range of different positions and movement into your workday to prevent repetitive muscle injuries. CTSI can provide information on maintaining a healthy and ergonomic workspace. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861 0507. 