Oregon OSHA

FACT SHEET Plus

Sit-stand computer workstations

Sit-stand computer workstations

Did you know that long periods of sitting can increase your risk of heart disease and other medical problems – even if you exercise regularly?

Sedentary behavior is a significant health risk and a major contributor to obesity and chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. University of Sydney research found that people older than 45 who sit for 11 hours or more a day are 40 percent more likely to die within three years than those who sit for less than four hours. Those who sit for between eight hours and 11 hours a day are 15 percent more likely to die within three years.

Adjustable desk table

Standing for long periods of time can cause health problems, too. Maintaining the same standing posture for long periods of time places the muscles in a constant state of contraction. Standing for too long when you are working can stress your back because muscle groups in your legs, hips, back, and neck are tensed. Prolonged standing is a risk factor for varicose veins and possible complications during pregnancy.

A good ergonomic practice, and a way to sit less and avoid prolonged standing, is to adopt a variety of comfortable postures throughout the workday. In fact, some ergonomists say, "Your best posture is your next posture."

Most workers can avoid prolonged sitting and be healthier just by getting up and moving for a few minutes every hour. Others might find sit-stand workstations helpful.

Could you benefit from a sit-stand workstation?

If you have little or no back pain while you are sitting, have a job that requires you to frequently leave your desk, or have a flexible work schedule and can leave your desk when you want, then you probably do not need a sit-stand workstation.

However, if you experience pain or discomfort sitting for 30 minutes or less, a sit-stand workstation might help you. Also, having the option to move between sitting and standing positions can help you maintain comfortable working postures throughout the day.

What makes a good sit-stand workstation?

A well-designed sit-stand workstation:

- Is height adjustable and can accommodate all users.
- Has easy-to-adjust components.
- Has a height-adjustable desk top with a height-adjustable keyboard tray that will fit sitting and standing users.
- Has a monitor platform or arm that allows the top of the monitor to be set at the same height as the user's eyes.
- A keyboard and mouse at the same height that can be set at or slightly below elbow height.

Adjustable desk top mounted

Photo credit: Ergotron

Website:
www.orosha.org

Salem Central Office
350 Winter St. NE, Rm. 430
Salem, OR 97301-3882

Phone: 503-378-3272
Toll-free: 800-922-2689
Fax: 503-947-7461

Oregon OSHA
A Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services

Next Page

Suggestions for employers

- Survey employees to determine how much time they spend sitting during their workday and use the information to determine if prolonged sitting is a problem.
- Provide training that covers:
  - Neutral work postures
  - The benefits of changing postures frequently
  - How to adjust a sit-stand workstation
  - How to properly adjust a sitting workstation
  - The fundamentals of ergonomics
- Provide a sit-stand workstation for employees to try, train them how to use it, and ask them if they find it helpful.
- Encourage employees to adjust their sit-stand stations instead of using only one position.
- Consider sit-stand workstations for workers who do mostly sedentary work and workers who may be at risk of chronic disease.
- Consider ways to reduce prolonged sitting for at-risk employees, such as those at risk of developing Type II diabetes.
- `Use toolbox talks and your organization's newsletter to raise awareness about the risks of prolonged sitting.
- Try an occasional "stand-up" or "walking" meeting when the agenda permits it.
- Encourage managers and supervisors to show desirable behaviors, such as using their workstations in sitting and standing positions, eating away from their desk, and talking walks during breaks.
- Show employees how to adjust their chairs to a variety of comfortable positions.

Suggestions for employees

- Stand up and move for at least two minutes every half hour.
- Take regular walking breaks.
- Step outside occasionally for fresh air.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take a lunch break away from your desk.
- When it is possible, walk to co-workers' desks and talk to them instead of emailing them.

References

- ***Stand Up Comcare — Promoting Health By Tackling Sitting As A Risk Factor For Chronic Disease***, Australian Government, Comcare.
- U.S. Army Public Health Command Ergonomics Program
- ***Benefits Of Movement — Be Upstanding!***, Australian Government, Comcare.
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/standing/standing_basic.html
- *Development of Prolonged Standing Strain Index to Quantify Risk Levels of Standing Jobs*, Halim, I., Omar, A.R., ***International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*** (JOSE) 2012, Vol. 18, No. 1, 85–96

OR-OSHA (6/14) FS-56

The Standards and Technical Resources Section of Oregon OSHA produced this fact sheet to highlight our programs, policies, or standards. The information is from the field staff, research by the technical resources staff, and published materials. We urge readers to consult the actual rules as this fact sheet information is not as detailed.

Previous Page