



17 WAYS TO BE MORE ACTIVE AT WORK

1 YOUR COMMUTE
The time you spend travelling to and from work is happening anyway, so why not get some benefit out of it, instead of just sitting through it. If you live fairly close to work, try brisk walking, jogging, or cycling instead of driving or using public transport. If the distance is too long or daunting try parking some distance away from work, or getting off the bus or subway a few stops early and then walk or jog the remaining distance. Always choose the stairs or walk up the escalator, and listening to some motivating music can add that extra little bit of encouragement.



2 WORK OUT DURING LUNCH
If you can't exercise before or after work, then lunchtime is your best bet for fitting in a real session. This may involve joining a gym close to work or taking a brisk walk or run from the office and back. It'll take a little planning ahead, like packing a gym bag, but it can easily be done. Just don't skip lunch altogether, as your body does need to be refuelled.



3 CHANGE YOUR CHAIR FOR A STABILITY BALL
Sitting on a stability ball helps you to practice better posture and encourages good spinal alignment. It also helps strengthen your abdominal muscles as they contract to maintain balance.



4 TAKE THE STAIRS
We all know we should take the stairs instead of the lift, but how often do we actually do it? The trick is making it a habit, so you stop thinking about it as a choice you have to make every time. Start by aiming to take the stairs once a day, then work up until it's automatic. Or climb a few flights of stairs in your short breaks. Start small and work up to an extra floor each week.



5 USING THE BATHROOM ON A DIFFERENT FLOOR
If you use the stairs each time you need to visit the restroom and you alternate floors doing so you will soon clock up some extra mileage in the office. Added to that drinking plenty of water (instead of caffeinated drinks) will keep you feeling hydrated in those often stuffy air-conditioned offices, reducing your risk of developing headaches from caffeine, and the extra trips to the bathrooms won't do you any harm either!



6 TAKE SHORT REGULAR 'ACTIVE' BREAKS DURING THE DAY
On really busy days, you can still work out in short breaks by getting up, stretching your legs, and walking around. It's all about making movement a natural part of your day. One study showed that people who take walking breaks during work feel more enthusiastic, less tense, and generally more relaxed and able to cope than when they don't take walk breaks.



Don't wait till you reach your breaking point, set a computer prompt or reminder on your phone to have breaks every 30 to 60 minutes. Get up and walk around the building, your floor, your office, up and down a flight of stairs, do some exercises standing at your desk. The exercise itself will add to your daily cumulative total but is also crucial in preventing musculoskeletal pain developing.



Taking a break and changing your position, doing some exercises and stretches will relieve you from sustained postures that lead to neck and back pain.

7 THE COFFEE 'RUN'
Go out and get the coffee, tea or smoothie instead of letting someone else pick yours up for you. Even better you could make a plan to try different vendors further down the road rather than the closest to the office.

8 WALK WHILE YOU'RE ON THE PHONE
Unless you need to be typing whilst talking, try to make a habit of taking phone calls standing or pacing in your office. The distance is obviously dependant on your phone's 'mobility'. Take advantage of moving, every little bit adds up and the change in posture can reduce the chances of developing neck and back pain. Physical activity doesn't have to be formal exercise to have its benefits.

9 SKIP INSTANT MESSAGING AND EMAILING
If you have a question or query from a colleague within the building instead of popping off an IM, email or using the internal phone extensions, get up and walk to his/her office and have the discussion face to face. Those short walks will add to your total exercise time and get you off your chair to relieve poor posture.

10 PICK UP THE PACE
Be it personal or work-related errands, turn these activities into little exercise bouts.



Speed walk the mall, or to and from the post office. Consider not using a shopping cart at the supermarket, lifting and carrying things strengthens your muscles and bones, an additional benefit to your body.

11 WALK AND TALK

Where practical, conduct meetings on the go. Plan a meeting while walking around a local park or simply outdoors or even laps around the office park. This is a good time for less formal discussion and brainstorming sessions and if necessary you could take a small tablet if you need to show graphs, images, or diagrams.

12 START OR JOIN A FITNESS CLUB WITH CO-WORKERS

Sometimes it helps to have the inspiration of others and the 'pressure' of meeting someone else and not letting them down, to motivate you to exercise and sometimes it's just nice to have the company. The chances are that you're not the only one at your office trying to fit exercise into a busy workday. Seek out others and plan a daily walking schedule at lunchtime or a pre- or post-work walk before heading home. It could be as simple as a push-up club that meets before lunch three days a week, or a running club that does an after-work run. Or, you could take it a step further and rally your co-workers to make a team and have a weekly social indoor soccer or hockey match with a local league.

13 STOP AND STRETCH

Taking regular active breaks is crucial and stretching helps to relieve tension and spasm in tight muscles that are working hard to sustain static postures. If muscles are weak, the work involved in holding positions can result in it becoming short and tight, often resulting in pain. This is where having good desk posture and ergonomics plays a particularly important part.

14 DO WORKOUTS AT YOUR DESK

Cardiovascular fitness is essential for cardiovascular and metabolic health but strength training is also a crucial part of physical activity, maintaining strong muscles ensures good posture, joint support, bone health and balance and mobility. So make time to do some specific exercises. Your therapist will be able to give you some advice.

15 FREQUENT FLYER

If you travel often for work it can be hard to keep a regular exercise routine. So plan ahead and get to know the places where you go, maybe you can book a hotel that has a gym facility or one that is close to a safe park area for a walk/run. Otherwise consider purchasing an exercise app – there are

many that allow for short 20 minute workouts with no equipment, something you could easily do in your hotel room.

16 SIT-STAND DESK

If it's possible in your office, standing up to work can be a great choice. Standing uses more muscles and burns more calories than sitting – and it can be great for your back and posture. A sit-stand desk which easily adjusts can be perfect to use through the day changing postures to reduce musculoskeletal pain and improve circulation, blood pressure and lipid profile.

17 TRACK YOUR STEPS

It's a lot easier to be active when you can keep track of how much you're really moving. Yes, there's a reason everyone is wearing activity trackers and smart watches. Put one on your wrist and find out how many steps you do in a normal day, then set yourself a goal to improve on that number every day. Tracking your activity can be an excellent way to motivate yourself and keep you reminded of your goals. Studies say a goal of 10,000 steps a day is ideal for achieving benefits of physical activity, but in the same way regardless of your starting point, any increase in step count by 1000 – 2000 steps can make a difference. So take long way round, or the scenic route and think on your feet – literally. All the small things will add up over time, making your health goals of being more active through the working day a reality.



The information contained in this article is intended as general guidance and information only and should not be relied upon as a basis for planning individual medical care or as a substitute for specialist medical advice in each individual case. ©Co-Kinetic 2019