



SIT-TO-STAND WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS



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We all know that sitting all day is bad for us, but just how bad? Many recent articles point to research that shows that sitting down all day is very bad for us, even if we exercise regularly. Sitting for large amounts of the day increases the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and more. Besides taking regular breaks to move around and occasionally replacing our desk chair with an exercise ball, the other obvious answer is to spend more of the day standing.

A recent article in the New York Times refers to research finding that those who stood all day doing -- nothing other than standing -- burned hundreds of calories more than a group of individuals sitting all day. For both men and women in this study, standing burned multiple calories, but did not ignite hunger. The research found that if you want to lose weight, you don't necessarily have to go for a long run: "Just get rid of your chair." (Reynolds, 2010)

Besides costly treadmill desks, there are other options. Sit-to-Stand workstations provide the ability to frequently change positions and help to improve not only computer-related repetitive stress injuries but also overall health.



Previous thought on proper ergonomic positioning was that a static sitting position with the body in 90° angles was best. New studies show that any fixed position will increase muscle fatigue, and that one key component of proper ergonomics is movement. A study of people who sit for many hours found that those who took frequent small breaks — standing up to stretch or walk down the corridor — had smaller waists and better profiles for sugar and fat metabolism than those who did their sitting in long, uninterrupted chunks. (Judson, 2010)

Some examples of healthy movements are adjusting a chair or backrest, stretching fingers, hands, arms, and torso, looking away from the monitor, periodically standing up to walk around for a few minutes, and switching between a sitting and standing position. Movements such as these promote circulation and reduce muscle fatigue. Frequent position changes can help to prevent computer-related, repetitive stress injuries. Sit-to-stand workstations that are easy to adjust encourage individuals to change positions frequently.

Several ways to provide the most varied amount of position changes is with an adjustable height workstation or a workstation with that includes a monitor arm and keyboard mechanism with enough adjustment to be used in either a sitting or standing position. Regardless of which option you select, the key is that it is easy to adjust.

If an ergonomic station is easy for people to use, then they will be more likely to use it to adjust their position, reducing the stress on their body. As reported in the November 2003 Journal of the American Medical Association, common pain conditions are having an adverse impact on productivity. Researchers found that lost productivity due to back pain, headache, neck pain and other musculoskeletal discomfort is costing U.S. companies an estimated \$61.2 billion per year. Implementing ergonomic workstations, and accessories can help to alleviate employee pain and increase productivity. Incorporating ergonomics into workstation design is an investment that makes sense.

If fact, according to OSHA there are advantages to incorporating ergonomics into the workplace; increased savings through fewer injuries and workers' compensation claims, fewer employees experiencing pain, increased productivity, increased morale, and reduced absenteeism (OSHA, n.d.).



It is important to note that although movement is an important facet of ergonomics, if one part of the ergonomic equation is missing, it can render other ergonomic components of the station less effective. For example, if a workstation design utilizes a keyboard mechanism, but fails to include a monitor arm, the user may need to hunch closer over the workstation in order to see the monitor. If you spend a lot of time with your shoulders and upper back slumped over a keyboard, this eventually becomes your normal posture. This is not just an issue in terms of how you look; it frequently leads to chronic neck and shoulder pain (Master, 2010).

An ergonomic working environment can help reduce loss of productivity due to injury, and create a better working environment, simply by providing ergonomic tools in the workstations. Along with providing ergonomic tools, training on how to properly adjust the equipment is key to users from putting themselves at risk. One site with free up to date ergonomic information is OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration). OSHA has an entire section of Ergonomic E-Tools for Computer Workstations, which demonstrates proper ergonomic positions while in both a sitting and standing computer workstation position.

Incorporating sit-to-stand workstations in the workplace will provide flexible ergonomic solutions that give employees numerous options for comfortable working positions. Ergonomic workstations can have a positive impact on the health, morale, and productivity of employees.



Tired of pulling up a chair to do your work? Try standing. It improves circulation, promotes creativity, and has been known to make tasks easier to accomplish. Influence tables readily convert from sit-to-stand with either a crank or a counterbalance mechanism. These fast and simple ergonomic adjustments make it easy to stand and work, or meet with others.

Influence Adjustable Height Tables by Interior Concepts

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