


Executive Summary

MOVE MORE SIT LESS RESEARCH REPORT 2016



an initiative of  BLUEEARTH

The Move More Sit Less research report provides an overview of key findings of a national survey on the sitting habits, attitudes and feelings of over 1,000 Australians.

The Move More Sit Less survey examined a range of sitting habits including;

- awareness of the risks associated with sedentary behaviour
- perceived and reported sitting habits
- awareness of physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines
- feelings associated with long periods of sitting
- feelings about breaking up periods of sitting
- perceptions about sitting and wellbeing and
- strategies to reduce the frequency and duration of prolonged periods of sitting.

Key findings

- 1 in 6 people sit for more than 11 hours per day, increasing their risk of early death by 40%
- 2 out of 3 of people sit for longer than they thought each day
- 80% of people would like to sit less
- 67% of people incorrectly think 30 minutes of exercise a day is enough to keep you healthy even if you sit for long periods throughout your day.
- 98% had heard that extended periods of sitting was not good for health
- 53% regularly actively tried to break up long periods of sitting
- 67% felt more refreshed after taking a short break
- 68% said that sitting less at work could 'definitely' improve their wellbeing

When sitting for long periods –

- 82% of people felt tired and lethargic
- 65% felt less productive
- 69% felt unhealthy
- 50% felt stiff and tense

The key strategies identified to encourage and support people to move More and Sit Less were

- Physical changes to the work environment (58% respondents)
- Campaign to remind people (40%)
- Cultural change – seeing others move more and sit less (37%)
- An app to remind people (33%)
- Guidelines to follow (23%)

Respondents also identified a number of barriers to moving more and sitting less in the workplace.

“Currently a medical certificate is required to obtain a stand up desk. I'd prefer support in place that doesn't require sickness first.”

It is clear from the survey that, people are both

- aware of the negative impact of prolonged sitting on health and wellbeing; and
- have a genuine desire to sit less

However, although they are aware of the health impacts of prolonged sitting there are still a significant number that think 30 minutes of activity per day is enough to keep you healthy. This suggested the desire to move more and sit less is driven by more immediate benefits than the physical health benefits which are generally more long term.

Respondents associated moving more and sitting less with feeling more productive, refreshed, relaxed, healthy and happy and like they should do it more. Conversely prolonged sitting was associated with feeling unproductive, lethargic, fed up and unhealthy.

There has been significant media over the last decade highlighting the dangers of sitting, however there have not been any coordinated health promotion campaigns focussed on providing information about sitting.

Responses to the survey highlight that people are seeking more information and support in order to move more and sit less. Indeed a multifaceted approach is required which combines awareness raising, cultural change, changes to the physical environment, reminders and guidelines.

There is also much to be learnt from those that are already sitting less (4 hours or less). A commitment to taking regular breaks, an awareness that 30 minutes is not enough to keep you healthy, limiting long periods of sitting, limiting sitting time at work and an active lifestyle are all factors associated with low daily sitting levels.

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