

Sitting may be dangerous for your health

9th June, 2015



If you spend most of your days sitting at school, work, at a computer or stretched out on a couch at home, you may be taking up to two years off your life. It is common knowledge that a sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and obesity, and can result in premature death. Many

people think they can compensate for sitting around by walking, playing sports or going to the gym. Unfortunately, this might not be so. A new study just published in the journal 'Annals of Internal Medicine' suggests the effect on our longevity from sitting for long periods of time cannot be reversed through exercise. Even 60 minutes of daily exercise may not be enough.

The study is from Dr. David Alter and his colleagues at Toronto University. Dr Alter and his team analysed 47 studies that tracked different groups of people, who kept notes on how long they sat down each day and how much they exercised. They found that the most sedentary groups had a 24% increased chance of dying than the least sedentary ones. This remained the case even though those who sat a lot also did 60 minutes of daily exercise. Dr. Alter writes: "Reducing your sit-down time by 2-3 hours each day by standing up at your desk, taking frequent breaks to stretch and walk, or watching TV...on your feet may be better than an expensive, crowded, smelly gym and be just what the doctor ordered."

Sources: *MedicalNewsToday.com / Independent / MedicalDaily*

Writing

"All people should work standing up." Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

sitting / stretched out / couch / common knowledge / heart disease / longevity / colleagues / exercised / sedentary / frequent breaks / expensive / crowded / doctor

True / False

- Sitting too much could reduce your life by two years. T / F
- A sedentary lifestyle increases the chances of getting diabetes. T / F
- The study in this article was published in the journal 'Sitting'. T / F
- An hour of daily exercise may not reverse the damage done by sitting. T / F
- The study was conducted by a team from Oxford University. T / F
- A group in the study who sat had a 24% higher chance of dying. T / F
- A doctor recommended sitting down 20-30 minutes less each day. T / F
- A doctor ordered people into gyms. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. couch | a. inactive |
| 2. sedentary | b. packed |
| 3. increases | c. co-workers |
| 4. compensate for | d. examined |
| 5. periods | e. cancel out |
| 6. colleagues | f. sofa |
| 7. analysed | g. regular |
| 8. chance | h. heightens |
| 9. frequent | i. possibility |
| 10. crowded | j. spells |

Discussion – Student A

- What are your sitting habits?
- How sedentary is your lifestyle?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Would you stop sitting down if it meant you lived longer?
- How can you exercise while sitting down?
- How possible is it for you to not sit down for most of the day?
- In what ways is standing better than sitting?
- What exercise do you get every day?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. stretched out | a. knowledge |
| 2. taking up to two years | b. groups of people |
| 3. common | c. be so |
| 4. this might not | d. periods of time |
| 5. sitting for long | e. the case |
| 6. studies that tracked different | f. doctor ordered |
| 7. a 24% increased | g. on a couch at home |
| 8. This remained | h. to stretch |
| 9. taking frequent breaks | i. off your life |
| 10. be just what the | j. chance of dying |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the idea of a standing up chair?
- Should governments be telling us to stand up more often?
- How would life be better if you sat down a lot less?
- Do you believe reports that tell us things are bad for us?
- What do you think of the idea of watching TV standing up?
- How would houses and offices be different if we never sat?
- How likely are you to change your lifestyle from now?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- a nstryeaed lifestyle
- result in meaepurt death
- they can nomteecaps for sitting around
- published in the jraonlu
- the effect on our gtieylonv
- be sdvrreee through exercise
- his oleuaclegs at Toronto University
- yadsnale (UK) / ynaездl (USA) 47 studies
- a 24% sreadicen chance
- This arnediem the case
- daily icrxeeese
- taking fneuqret breaks

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. a	3. h	4. e	5. j
6. c	7. d	8. i	9. g	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Sitting

You think sitting is the worst thing for our health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful thing of these (and why): too much sleep, driving or using the elevator instead of the stairs.

Role B – Too much sleep

You think too much sleep is the worst thing for our health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful thing of these (and why): sitting, driving or using the elevator instead of the stairs.

Role C – Driving

You think driving is the worst thing for our health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful thing of these (and why): too much sleep, sitting or using the elevator instead of the stairs.

Role D – Elevator not stairs

You think using the elevator instead of the stairs is the worst thing for our health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful thing of these (and why): too much sleep, driving or sitting.

Speaking – Sedentary

Rank these with your partner. Put the riskiest activities to our health at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Sitting | • Watching TV |
| • Computers | • Driving |
| • Too much sleep | • Elevators, not stairs |
| • Office work | • No exercise |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.