



Influencers in the Field

Alexis Fotter Marketing Account Manager

571.282.2438 | alexis_fotter@ajg.com | [linkedin.com/in/alexis-fotter](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexis-fotter)

Beat the Desk Slump: Simple Ways to Support Your Health and Productivity

When you walk through your front door — or finally push away from your workstation for remote and hybrid workers — after a long day at work, is your sigh of relief more like a groan of pain?

Sedentary work, or jobs that require sitting for the bulk of a shift, is a relatively recent phenomenon driven by the digital age and corporate shift to desk-based knowledge roles — and it poses serious health concerns. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), on average, workers spent 44.9% of the workday sitting in 2025. However, certain professions spent more time seated, with software developers, marketing managers and lawyers clocking the most time at their desks with 97.1%, 93.2% and 86.4%, respectively.

If these statistics sound comparable to your current role, you must make positive lifestyle changes — both inside and outside of work — to support your wellbeing. Sitting for too long does more than give you achy muscles and joint pain; it can also heighten your risk of developing serious health conditions.

Continue reading to gain insight into the health benefits of making time for movement during the workday, the connection between physical activity and performance and how you sustainably build healthy habits.



The Drawbacks of Sedentary Work

For some health experts, sitting is seen as the [new smoking](#). If this seems alarmist, think again; a sedentary lifestyle can have long-lasting health consequences.

According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), researchers analyzed 13 studies focused on sitting time and activity levels among more than 1 million people. They found people who sat more than eight hours a day with no physical activity had a similar risk of dying to those with obesity and who smoke.

Not only can excess time spent sitting at your desk have long-term health impacts, but it can also harm your immediate health. Some of the most common complaints arising from the end of the workday are muscle and joint pain; when we aren't moving, these important aspects of our physiology can tighten up and stiffen.

Specifically, [sitting](#) affects our hip flexors and hamstring muscles, plus the joints in our hips and knees, something that drives lower back pain and knee stiffness. Too much inactivity can even cause what's known as "gluteal amnesia," where tight front hip flexors force the glutes to stretch, lose blood flow and eventually stop responding to brain signals. The [glutes](#), which are made up of three separate muscles, form the foundation of your lower body and core; when they're weak, the surrounding muscles are forced to overcompensate, leading to gait and posture problems.

Being too sedentary can also affect your [circulation](#), a vital process your body requires to deliver oxygen-rich blood to tissues and move waste products out. When you sit for long periods without moving, that blood flow slows — even to the point of limb swelling, varicose veins or harmful blood clots.

Together, a lack of activity and poor circulation can lead to feelings of fatigue and muscle weakness as your daily stamina is slowly worn down. With constricted blood flow, less oxygen and fewer nutrients reach your cells and tissues, causing your muscles to shrink and lose strength with prolonged disuse. Your blood sugar levels will likely increase, a warning sign for Type 2 diabetes, because your body is burning fewer calories and doesn't need to process sugars for energy.

Sitting the majority of the workday, while common for many corporate professionals, can wreak havoc on the delicate interconnected systems that comprise our bodies. And it's not just our skeletal, muscular and circulatory systems affected: poor posture at your desk can even [impair digestion](#) due to excess abdominal compression, leading to common issues like bloating, acid reflux and slowed digestion.

Because of this, you must get more movement in your workday to build good habits, keep these systems working properly and maintain your good health for longer.

The Health Benefits of Movement: Understanding the Workplace Performance Connection

Do you want to feel better, safeguard your health and improve your performance at work? The answer is simple: get moving. It's never too late to start a fitness journey, and any activity you participate in — such as climbing the stairs versus taking the elevator, parking further away from your destination or taking a walk on your lunch break — poses immediate brain and mental health benefits.

Here are some of the ways that making time for movement during your day, whether you're at the office or working from home, can help you succeed and stand out in your role:

- **Get a brain boost for memory and learning** – Have you ever been on a walk after work, decompressing after a busy workday, only to be struck by a sudden breakthrough or idea that evaded you all day? That's because, according to a [new research review](#), physical activity offers small to moderate improvements in general cognition, memory and executive function, no matter your age, how healthy you are or how often you exercise. Even light exercises come with notable cognitive benefits, making it a simple yet powerful way to boost your brain's abilities. Aerobic exercise, meanwhile, triggers the release of [brain-derived neurotrophic factors](#) (BDNF), protein believed to keep neurons healthy, foster the growth of new brain cells and strengthen the pathways and connections between brain cells, helping the brain function better. BDNF is also believed to play an important role in neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize itself, which is vital for learning new information and skills.
- **Reduce your workplace stress** – Our jobs can be stressful, leading to conditions like anxiety, or, if left untreated for too long, the chronic occupational phenomenon known as “burnout.” Exercising or getting movement during the day can reduce these negative feelings through the release of feel-good hormones known as endorphins. These hormones act as the body's natural painkillers and are known to improve mood. But if you commit yourself to a regular exercise routine, you can net greater benefits by lowering your [baseline cortisol levels](#). By lowering the amount of these stress hormones in your body, you can help it better handle stressful situations so you can work with improved clarity and enhanced mental resilience for the challenges you face.
- **Reach new creative heights** – When you're on deadline and under pressure, it can be hard to channel the creative energy needed to make a project or campaign come to life. But did you know that the simple act of walking can boost a person's creative output an average of 60%? A [landmark study by Stanford researchers](#) showed just that, demonstrating that creative thinking improves while a person is walking and shortly thereafter. In the more than 10 years since the Stanford study, [research](#) continues to back its findings; so instead of booking a conference room for your next brainstorming session, consider taking your team for a walk around the block.

Changing your sedentary routine and finding more opportunities for physical activity won't just help support your wellbeing now and enhance your performance at work; it also improves your future health outcomes. As we age, our bodies naturally start to wear down; muscles begin to lose mass and weaken, damaged cartilage in our joints causes stiffness and chronic long-term conditions like arthritis or heart issues can make movement difficult.

Incorporating physical activity into your routine early and keeping up with it as you age is vital to [your future independence](#). It can help you avoid trips to the hospital by preventing falls through improved balance, supports bone health to reduce your risk of fractures or breaks and builds muscle strength so you can do things like walk, climb stairs and get out of a seated position without assistance.





Simple Ways to Stay Active During the Workday — at Home or in the Office

As you've read, there are significant benefits, both personal and professional, to physical activity. But when many of us work long hours at a desk, finding time to exercise can be a struggle, especially due to family needs and other responsibilities. Fortunately, there are ways for you to improve your health outcomes and get your blood flowing without leaving your office or home.

NASA, the U.S. agency in charge of space exploration, understands the importance of keeping your body in tip-top shape when working in high-stress seated positions — something mission control and other important scientists are very familiar with. The NASA Headquarters Fitness Center developed a program called [DeskFit](#), containing tips to stay healthy while working, in addition to 20 seated or standing exercises that can be performed wherever your work takes you.

However, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to find opportunities for beneficial movement during your workday. All you need to do is start small and set realistic goals with activities you enjoy. Here are some simple tips to help get you moving:

- **Ensure your workspace is ready for your new routine** – Purchasing a standing desk, under-desk treadmill or a pair of wireless headphones so you can take calls on the go are all powerful ways to get active. Ensure your space, whether at home or in the office, is prepared by removing any clutter, wires and papers that can pose a fall risk.
- **Schedule activity breaks** – The NASA program recommends taking a break from sitting every 30 minutes to stand and stretch your body. These breaks can be as long as your schedule allows, from a brief two-minute microbreak to 10-minute durations before, during and after work. By scheduling your breaks, you can build a powerful routine.
- **Make small decisions that build over time** – Parking further away from the office, taking the stairs instead of the elevator and walking during your lunch breaks are great ways to build a powerful wellness routine. At home, this can also include “commuting” to work by taking a quick walk around the neighborhood before starting your day, using breaks to perform exercises from NASA's DeskFit program and stretching while on voice-only calls.
- **Break out of sedentary convenience** – We all have our workplace habits designed to make life easier, but introducing a little inconvenience can help protect your health. For instance, instead of keeping a giant water bottle on your desk, opt for a smaller glass that you'll have to get up to refill more often. Rather than using the printer closest to you, send your papers to the farthest one. Take the long way around to talk to a colleague or do a lap around your home before you refill your coffee cup. These small adjustments can help your body get a reprieve from long hours spent sitting.

No matter what activities you select, what's important is that you're moving. Rather than comparing your workplace routine to those who hit the gym for hours at a time, celebrate the progress you've made and aim for consistency rather than perfection. Create accountability for yourself to encourage adherence to your fitness goals, whether by encouraging your coworkers, friends and family to participate or wearing health trackers to help monitor your new habits.

Making Movement a Lifelong Priority

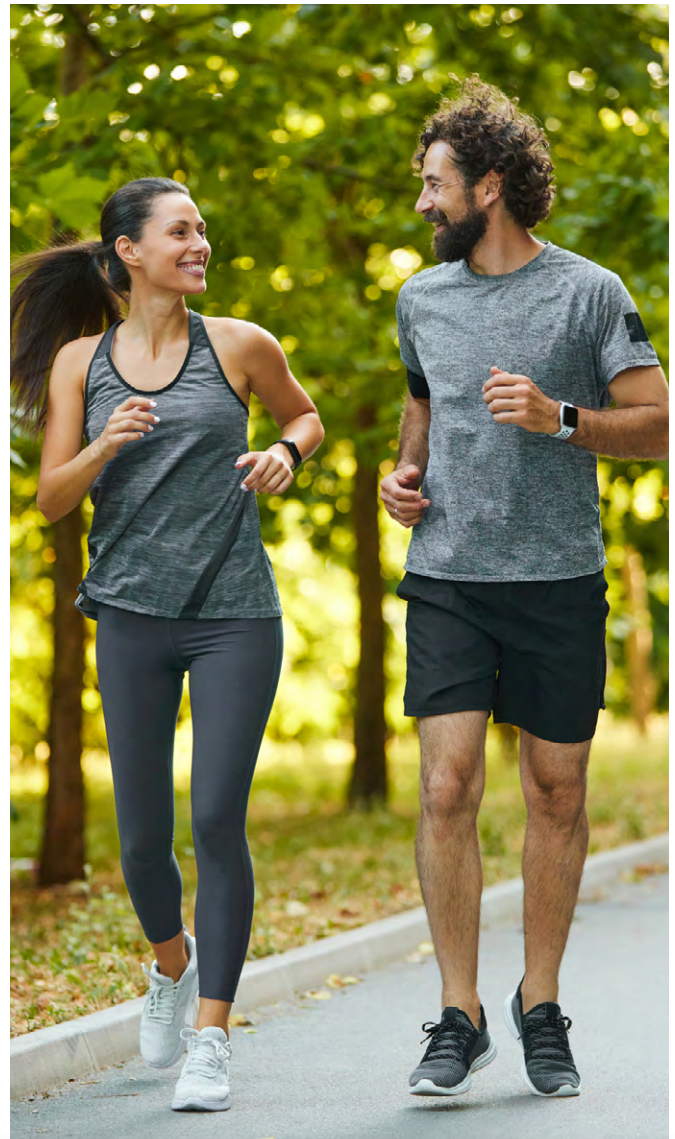
When we view our physical fitness as another item on a to-do list, it can become another time-consuming responsibility we have to muddle our way through. Try reframing your body's need for movement as an investment in your current wellbeing and future health outcomes; the small, daily habits you're building now can not only help you avoid disruptive aches and pains but also lower your risk of developing chronic harmful health conditions.

At Gallagher Affinity, [we understand](#) the link between physical wellbeing, emotional health and workplace performance. That's why we support the multifaceted health needs of not only our employees through the provision of top-rated resources and solutions, but also the associations and member organizations who rely on us to support their members' evolving needs.

Get Moving Checklist

Small movements can reap big health benefits. Use this checklist to keep you moving during the workday:

- ☐ Use the stairs
- ☐ Set movement reminders
- ☐ Take a walk during lunch
- ☐ Stretch at my desk
- ☐ Go the long way around
- ☐ Perform a DeskFit exercise



To explore how our insurance products, solutions and member savings program can help you ensure the wellbeing of your members or employees, or to connect with an expert to assess your current offerings, visit gallagherperks.com/mickey-herbert.