



Sitting is the New Smoking

Sitting is the new habit that is as dangerous as smoking

It seems unbelievable that only a few generations ago that smoking was accepted and the health risks ignored.

Now there is no questioning the irreversible damage smoking can do and the cost incurred, with a massive 6% of total worldwide health spending spent on the direct and indirect costs of smoking. It's not a good sign then when research warns there another habit that may be as harmful as smoking, especially when that habit is not only common, but accepted as part our modern lives.

What is this potentially life shortening habit? **Sitting!**

Research is continuing to show evidence that sitting for long periods increases the risks for serious illnesses such as diabetes, some cancers and heart disease including a study reported in the European Journal of Preventative Cardiology. This study involved a population sample of middle-aged men and showed that low aerobic capacity was associated with increased mortality rates, independent of traditional risk factors, including smoking, blood pressure and serum cholesterol. In a similar study the American National Cancer Group reported their study involving over 4 million individuals found a statistically significantly higher risk for three types of cancer—colon, endometrial, and lung amongst those reporting the most sedentary behavior.

Initially the increased prevalence of these diseases in sedentary populations was put down to the fact that a sedentary person spending more time seated therefore spends less time moving. In more recent research it is becoming more clear that a person spending a frequent portion of their day seated may still experience the negative effects of sitting EVEN IF they are partaking in regular exercise.

What does this mean to the average office worker or couch potato? Being active for short bursts does offer plenty of benefits for health, wellbeing and fitness, but can't totally 'fix' a sedentary lifestyle.

It's perhaps time for a paradigm shift; making movement not just something we do for a short burst to 'get fit' or 'lose weight', but rather seek ways to be active on a regular basis throughout the day.

Moving regularly and being active is a no brainer for health both short and long term. Think of a scheduled workout or class as simply one part of this activity equation, offering a chance to get your heart rate up, move weights and get up a sweat - all benefits that can't be achieved for the average person throughout the day. But in addition, those with less active days, such as office workers, should look at ways to sneak in other activity breaks.

If you need inspiration on how to increase your incidental exercise and movement outside of your regular structured workout, then the best person to ask is an exercise professional. The important thing is to make sure that they are REPs registered, which means they have the knowledge and skill to help you.

References:

<https://academic.oup.com/jnci/article/doi/10.1093/jnci/dju206/1010488/Sedentary-behavior-increases-the-risk-of-certain>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010912.pub3/full>

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

