



Don't Just Sit There!

Most of us know that sitting too much is not ideal for our health, yet the average adult is sedentary, or non-active, for nearly 8 hours a day. Things start to go wrong in our bodies when we sit for too long, so try to limit recreational sedentary and screen-time to 2 hours per day.

Some things that start to happen when people are not active include:

Organ Outrage: Blood flows slower during prolonged sitting, leading to high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol. People who sit for extended periods of time have a higher risk for breast, colon, and endometrial cancers. Regular exercise can boost the production of cancer-fighting antioxidants to discourage the growth of dangerous cells.

Muscle Meltdown: Sitting down too much means your abdominals do not have to hold you upright and stabilized, so they break down and turn soft. With the legs bent at 90 degrees all day, the muscles that flex the hips get tight and immobile, and the glutes you sit on get flabby and useless.

Lousy Legs: Weight-bearing exercise improves the condition of the bones, so sitting has the opposite effect. Prolonged sedentary time can slow circulation which can cause more damage to the muscles and their function.

Top Trouble: Slouching in a chair can lead to a sore neck and shoulders, as well as a strained neck. With decreased blood flow, brain function slows down and also inhibits the production of brain and mood-boosting chemicals. Exercise is necessary to pump fresh, oxygen-rich blood to the brain to optimize academic performance.

Back Bummer: While teens probably won't notice it yet, prolonged sitting decreases the flexibility of the spine, making it more susceptible to injury and breakdown. When the muscles that support the spine do not get used, they decrease their function and can lead to low back pain and dysfunction.